

**YOUNG MAN OF
THE WORLD**



"Young Man of the World"

YOUNG MAN OF THE WORLD

T. R. YBARRA

*Author of "Young Man of Caracas"
"The Passionate Warrior," etc., etc.*



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TO PENNY

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Foreword

"Now is this not Ridiculous? . . ."

I FEEL uncomfortable.

Here I have gone and written a book which—in a misleading crescendo—leads up, through schooldays and bright college years and passages of calf-love and early experiences in business, to the period of my career when I was a correspondent in Europe and other foreign parts for American newspapers and magazines.

In that capacity I watched, from excellent reserved seats, international situations of immense importance spread themselves across the faces of whole continents. I sat beside foreign statesmen of appalling prominence and listened while they told me tremendous things about Europe and points east and south. I cabled or mailed what they told me, in serried thousands of words, to the New York Times and Collier's Weekly and other journalistic suppliers, through long years, of my demand for food and drink.

All this I did. But I feel uncomfortable.

The reason for my discomfort is that nowhere in my whole book is there any hint of omniscience on my part about Europe and points south and east. Nowhere do I insinuate that the future, even in its remotest reaches, has for me the transparency of a running brook.

And that worries me. I remember clearly how an admirer

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of a colleague of mine in the realm of special corresponding wrote of him: "More than once he has had his hand on the strings that control human destinies." Nowhere in my book do I claim that sort of thing for myself. Often enough in my career I've had my hand on a string. But, when I touched it, it didn't control a human destiny. It stopped a bus.

And that, I feel, is all wrong. An American correspondent who doesn't know what it's all about! Preposterous!

However, I don't. As a consequence of that heinous confession, please, reader, do not throw this book out the window. In extenuation of dreadful crimes of omission, I wish to point out hastily that there *are* a few statements in this book which are positively owlsh. And there *is* one chapter which, in a way, is a blueprint of how the Europe of tomorrow ought to look.

May those owlsh statements and that blueprint be my apology for the lack of omniscience tainting the rest of my book! May they gloss over the fact that I give no hint that I ever had a private wire to God!

There is a possibility, of course, that omniscient foreign correspondents may have had their day. Who knows? Change rushes in everywhere. Our time moves at a terrific tempo.

T. R. Y.

Stamford, Conn. July, 1942.

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Chapter I

"A Paradox, a Paradox . . ."

MANY years ago when I was a freshman at Harvard and the sum total of my worldly achievements was, at the most liberal estimate, nil, I suddenly informed a classmate with whom I was taking a walk in Boston:

"There's an inscription on the house where I was born."

He goggled at me.

"Don't you believe it?"

"No."

"Want to bet?"

"Yes."

"One dollar?"

"Done!"

So I led him across Boston Common. I led him up one slope of Beacon Hill, past the Massachusetts State House. I led him down the other slope of Beacon Hill, into Hancock Street. I came to a halt opposite a musty house, built in the style of the early part of the previous century. I struck a dramatic attitude.

"Behold!" I exclaimed.

My friend read, on a tablet affixed to Number Twenty Hancock Street, the following:

*In This House
Lived Charles Sumner
1830-1867.*

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"Now do you believe me?" I inquired in a tone of triumph.

My friend gave me a look. He took a dollar bill from his pocket. He handed it to me—without a word. No, that isn't right. He handed it to me—with four words.

"Tom," he said, "God damn you."

I tell that story right here at the start of this book to impress upon my readers, as forcibly as I possibly can, that I was born in Boston.

I don't look it. My general appearance is strongly Latin—distinctly Spanish. There is a tendency among many people in North America to take it for granted that I was born in South America, of which part of this world my father was a native.

In South America, however, there is no such tendency. There, in spite of whatever Spanishism my features may denote, I am taken invariably for a North American. My father's folks in Venezuela delight in calling me Tom—as if they were good Anglo-Saxons. They consider me at all times *un yanqui*.

My predicament recalls often to my mind a little song in the Spanish operetta *El Dúo de la Africana*, much in vogue when I was living as a boy in Venezuela and spending many hours savoring the joys of light Spanish music.

That song was sung by the heroine of the piece, a melancholy young *gitana*, or gypsy girl. First, she accused the rest of the world in general of callous coldness in its relations with her. Then, turning to the specific, she made the accusation that the residents of each bank of the Guadalquivir, by the waters of which she had first seen the light of day, were eager to wish her onto the other bank. To a melancholy little refrain—I can still hum it, after forty years—she would warble:

"No sé ni en donde he nacido
Si en una o si en otra orilla,

"A PARADOX, A PARADOX . . ."

Sevilla dice que en Triana,
Triana dice que en Sevilla."

("Ah, me!—on which shore was I born,
Unfortunate little gitana?
Triana replies: 'In Sevilla.'
Sevilla replies: 'In Triana.'")

Passing lightly over the fact that I bear not the faintest resemblance to a little gypsy girl, unfortunate or otherwise, I wish to remark that I have always felt an affinity between myself and the melancholy heroine of that ditty.

I am a foreigner in Boston, which is one bank of my Guadaluquivir. I am a foreigner in Caracas, which is the other. I am a foreigner everywhere. In my early youth I heard and enjoyed the saying that a New England conscience doesn't keep New Englanders from doing things but keeps them from enjoying them. I am in a similar fix. My New Englandism fails to keep me from acting like a Latin, but makes it difficult at times for me to enjoy my Latin antics. Conversely, my Latinism doesn't bar somber New England actions on my part, but sometimes makes me acutely conscious of how somber they are. It is really a dreadful state of affairs. Sometimes I say to those around me: "Everything in this world should be tried once—*even this*" (and I point dramatically to myself). Yet, taken all in all, I haven't had a bad time in this life, even though I am an international paradox trying to navigate across a racial quagmire.

As a matter of fact, there are three of me.

My first self is living proof that my mother was Nelly Russell of Boston and Plymouth, Mass.

He is at home on Tremont Street. He is at home on Burial Hill. He is also at home on Broadway and Forty-Second Street. His name is Thomas Russell Ybarra.

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He speaks Manhattanese with a strong dash of Massachusetts. He thinks Bostonese with a liberal sprinkling of New York. At times he works himself up into such a state of northern patriotism that he begins to believe that all things indigent to the United States are *normal*; that all else is *abnormal*, a product of "lesser breeds without the law," ranging all the way from Albanians to Zulus. When he gets that way, he brandishes the Stars and Stripes with immense energy and makes the eagle scream in the most strident accents. He is strikingly similar, he feels convinced, to something just off a farm in Iowa.

That particular Tom Ybarra, I remember well, used to strut about Europe just after World War I, all puffed up with one-hundred-percentism. He used to remark to American Francophiles and Anglophiles—slinking shamefacedly about France and England, trying desperately to make Europe forget what they shudderingly considered the uncouthness and lack of subtlety of the average citizen of the United States—"Who cares what Europe thinks about *us*? The important thing is what *we* think about Europe!" Brutal words, those—words which broke up many a pink tea in Paris. But Tom Ybarra Number One slung them around with heartless cruelty, under the impression that he was a crusader for the great homespun American West, foreordained to do his bit toward saving Uncle Sam from effete softness. He was like the American journalist in the Europe of those days concerning whom Dorothy Thompson said: "All this talk of Charley Smith being 100 per cent American is nonsense! He is 105 per cent American!" Of course, deep down, that flag-waving, eagle-screaming Tom was merely one of my three selves trying to fight down the other two.

Self Number Two is Alejandro Tomás Simeón Mariano de las Mercedes Ybarra. That name, having been affixed to my

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baptismal certificate—in Boston, of all places!—without police interference, has practically never been used since except by Clem Meier, who rattles it off whenever he gets a chance, without having to refer to notes.

Anybody hearing that impressive syllabic parade—some day I shall procure a stop watch and learn how long it takes to pass a given point—would be justified, I think, in saying of it: "Not exactly Massachusetts." It came into being as my official appellation because my father was General Alejandro Ybarra of Caracas, Venezuela. Somehow that second self of mine which it connotes manages to lie down within me by the side of Thomas Russell Ybarra. Often they pinch each other. Frequently they kick each other. Sometimes one rolls over his bed-fellow and bites the latter *en passant*. As one of my friends, with rare insight into two reserved, iron-fenced peoples, puts it: "Intellectually, Tommy is Latin ice and New England fire."

A. T. S. M. d. l. M. Ybarra occasionally gets extremely Latin. Even at times when he has not for a number of years touched unadulterated Latinity at any point he feels sudden gusts of resentment when non-Latins around him act and talk as though all Latins should be either put to work singing languorous love ditties—in exotic costumes, to guitar accompaniments—or shot at sunrise. On such occasions that self of mine with the polysyllabic Spanish name is likely to become deeply offended and bitterly sarcastic.

Self Number Two also doesn't like the way many of his fellow-citizens of the United States assume that Latin Americans are people removed, in their habits one step from the jungle, in their clothing one garment from nakedness, and in their conversation one grunt from sign language. He sympathizes with the young lady from South America who, while at school

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in the United States, became exasperated explaining to school-mates that her fellow South Americans were as civilized and cultured as anybody anywhere. So she finally met them half-way by announcing that, at home, she and her parents and brothers and sisters and cousins and aunts lived in trees, ate raw steaks torn from wild beasts of the forest, or raw fish scooped out of the Amazon, and wore nothing except their skins.

"What do you do when foreign visitors come around?" asked her awed northern friends.

"Oh, we just wrap palm leaves around ourselves and hop off the branch on which we happen to be perching," she answered. "Then, when the visitors go away, we hop back again—and strip."

Citizens of the United States often ask me about the language used by those strange beings, the Spanish Americans. On such occasions my Latin self, roughly pushing aside my other two selves, takes full charge of the reply.

"Isn't there a big difference between the Spanish spoken in South America and the Spanish spoken in Spain?" those citizens inquire—usually in a tone implying that they are doing me a great favor by hinting that the grunt-and-gesture lingo of my father's folks bears any relation at all to the Spanish of Castile.

"There certainly is," my Latin self replies. "A big difference, in fact. But it isn't so big as the difference between English as spoken in England and English as spoken in the United States." That usually brings up northern questioners with a round turn. And it serves to illustrate a paradoxical truth: the average American hates to speak like an Englishman but hates to be told that he doesn't.

Questions about missionaries sent from North America to

"A PARADOX, A PARADOX . . ."

South America to convert the "natives" also frequently irritate the South American inside me. Once, when I was on a lecture tour, a gentleman in the audience—a very solemn and severe-looking gentleman—inquired of me, as I stood on the platform, ostensibly welcoming questions but feeling in reality like a military objective in an air raid:

"What progress is the American religion making in South America?"

"What do you mean by the American religion?" I inquired, with as much suavity as I could muster—which wasn't much.

"I mean the *Christian* religion, sir," replied the gentleman with great severity.

"We have one of those down there already," I answered. He glared at me. All through the rest of the question-and-answer period I felt that glare—and I hoped that he hadn't a gun.

From the moment that my mother married my father all that was humdrum vanished from her life. Excitement moved in. And it never moved out again.

Hers was an existence filled with suddenness. General Ybarra kept taking a hand in Venezuelan revolutions—which in those days, as a staple product of Venezuela, ranked just below coffee, cocoa, and mosquitoes. Whenever my father found that he had picked the loser in one of these squabbles, he was forced to settle for a while in Boston. There he helped make both ends meet by becoming an importer of Venezuelan products—coffee and cocoa, that is, not mosquitoes and revolutions. This sort of life was replete with romance and colorfulness, but it completely upset my mother's housekeeping arrangements. She must have felt strong misgivings sometimes at planning the next day's marketing without first consulting a clair-

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voyant. But she took it all in her stride. To her, it was just part of a wife's daily round. How she ever reconciled such a quicksandish existence with the basic Massachusetts within her has always been a mystery to me. But she did. She must have been born expressly for it.

The peripatetic life led by my parents during the opening phase of my earthly career is responsible, I am convinced, for the existence of my third self—Tom Ybarra, the Man Without a Country—Tom Ybarra, the little friend of all the world's trains and boats—Tom Ybarra, whom Penny derisively calls "Old Pa Rolling Stock."

I am a born traveler. Travel is in my bones. One of the queens of England (which one was it?—the one who did a lot of scrapping with the French and eventually lost Calais to them) is supposed to have said: "You will find engraved on my heart the word *Calais*." Well, you will find engraved on my heart the words "*Let's go*." At least, you would have found them engraved there if you had taken a peek into my internal workings any time during the first nine-tenths of my life. For, if ever there was anybody willing at the drop of a hat to go anywhere, it was I. This restlessness—I insist again—was in all probability due to the roving existence led by my father and mother for more than a score of years after their marriage.

My travels began when I was four years old. Then it was that my father and mother, hustling me out of Boston, Mass., my birthplace, took me for the first time to Venezuela. After a few months in Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, the political situation got too hot for my father. So we decamped in a hurry for Curaçao.

Curaçao is a Dutch island off the coast of Venezuela. In the turbulent old days of almost constant revolutions in that re-

"A PARADOX, A PARADOX . . ."

public, it provided a most conveniently situated and welcome haven for Venezuelans who had guessed wrong. Sprinting for the shore of the Caribbean, scrambling on board a steamship or a sailing vessel, and bobbing up—probably "broke" financially but safe for the moment—under the shelter of the flag of the Netherlands, became second nature for many citizens of Venezuela interested in politics. During a considerable period of his early married life it was second nature for my father.

After Curaçao it was Caracas for me again, and then Boston again, and then—after another dose of all three—it was Europe.

My first trip to Europe was taken when I was twelve years old. Since then I have crossed the Atlantic so often that I have lost count. Twenty-five round trips in a period of forty-five years—that is about right. In addition, I have been to Venezuela again and again and twice right down the eastern coast of South America to the Argentine and up the west coast of South America to Panama—with side trips to Central America. And, en route southward, I have several times taken in Cuba and Puerto Rico and other West Indian islands.

As a resident abroad, as a tourist, as a free-lance writer, as Berlin Correspondent of the New York Times, as that paper's London Correspondent, as its Traveling Foreign Correspondent, and as European Editor of Collier's, I have been up and down and down and up and across and athwart Europe so many times that I can imagine no worse fate than to be asked to give a detailed and accurate account of my wanderings there. I have worked in Fleet Street. I have lived in the Temple. Once I visited fifteen European countries in fifteen months. When I say that I have been in and out of Paris at least fifty times and stayed at some forty hotels there, my readers will begin to realize that the right word for my life is not *becalmed*.

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I have been in dozens of states of the American Union. I have been in Egypt. I have been in Morocco. I have been in Algeria and Tunisia. I have been in Asia Minor. Once I nearly went to China. Another time I almost embarked for India. I know two charming ladies who have circled the globe. I know a man intimately who has been to New Zealand. Yes, I am a born traveler.

Eventually I evolved a theory based on the agitated existence imposed upon me by my third self. I tried to explain this theory to Irving Brock. Irving had journeyed all the way from Paris to post-Hohenzollern, pre-Hitler Berlin, while I was New York Times Correspondent in the latter metropolis, to pay me a visit. This compliment impressed me so deeply that, when the time came for his return to the United States, I reciprocated by accompanying him as far as Holland. While we two were riding in a compartment of a Dutch train that was puffing its way from The Hague to Amsterdam, I endeavored (or rather Tom Ybarra Number Three did) to elucidate to Irving my theory as follows:

In this world those who stay in one place, going through a humdrum daily round consisting largely of the same sort of thing day in day out, are *abnormal*, whereas those who (like T. R. Ybarra) go gallivanting all over the universe, without fixed roots, are *normal*.

In further elucidation (Irving seemed to need it) of this theory I said:

"Let us suppose that this train is your real home. Let us suppose that your apartment in New York is a place that you merely *think* is your home—a place that, in reality, is just a railway car. Get me?"

"No," said Irving.

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Refusing to be discouraged, I continued—while the lush, cow-covered meadows of Holland flashed past the car window—to develop my bizarre arguments.

"All you need to do," I said brightly, "is to turn everything upside down. Just make a beginning with something, no matter what." Irving looked as if he were about to make a beginning with me. But the effect of my theory on him was as nothing compared with its impact on a solemn and silent Dutchman who occupied the seat across our compartment.

This Dutchman listened so attentively to my remarks that his ears flapped visibly. As for his eyes, they betrayed a doubt as to whether he should wait until he had called upon the police at the next stop for help, or sit on my chest, unaided, then and there.

"Now don't you see what I mean, Irving?" I inquired.

"No," said Irving.

I spoke no more. I made no further attempts to elucidate my theory. Irving seemed pleased. As for that Dutch fellow-passenger across the way, his face expressed soothing, liberating, unbounded relief.

After I had emerged from my huff, I decided not to waste my golden thoughts on Irving and a casual Dutchman but to put my theory into a book and hit them both over the head with it.

Unfortunately, I never got beyond the dedication of that book—a dedication which seemed to me to express what was in my mind so exactly as to make all further words superfluous. I was in the predicament—described to me by Jean Sibelius, when I interviewed him in Finland—of Heidenstam, the Swedish writer.

"This country place of mine," said Sibelius, as he waved his hand first at the little lake in front of his house and then at the

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rolling hills behind it, "is not beautiful. It is just pretty. That's the way I want it. I refuse to make the mistake of Heidenstam. Once I visited him in Sweden—at his country home, which is perfectly beautiful. I told him that it was just about the most beautiful place of its kind that I had ever seen. He looked at me dolefully.

" 'It is so beautiful that it keeps me from writing anything!' he told me. 'Just as I get a page of a new book written, I look out of my window, and the beauty of my home hits me between the eyes, and I decide immediately that nothing I write can possibly be worthy of the beautiful surroundings in which it was written!' "

"Well," continued Sibelius, with twinkling eyes, "I have *not* made that mistake. When I compose my music here in Jarvenpää—(that's the name of his place outside Helsinki), there's nothing about that lake"—he pointed north—"or about those hills"—he pointed south—"to make me ashamed of what I have created. *Just pretty*. That's all they are. So I go right on composing."

But it's the other way around with me. I'm another Heidenstam. Just as he has provided himself with a home which makes his literary output seem mean and inadequate, I have provided my (unwritten) book with a dedication which so completely fills the bill as to make that book, if ever written, a hopeless anticlimax. So I have decided never to write it. Here is the fatal dedication:

TO ALL THOSE
WHOSE FAVORITE TOWN
IS THE NEXT TOWN.

"It's the same way, in my mind, with marriage," I told Penny, shortly after my first meeting with her. "I know perfectly well

“A PARADOX, A PARADOX . . .”

**that I shall never ask a girl to marry me unless she has a home
on a train and a country place on a boat.”**

Penny, who had neither, eyed me quizzically.

“Oh, blah, blah, blah!” she said.

Chapter II

"List and Learn . . ."

VARIETY may be the spice of life, but it is the curse of education. My education has had so much variety pumped into it that its other ingredients are obscured in my memory by a certain haziness. I am more conscious of the places where I learned things than of the things I learned at those places. I visualize better the teachers who tried to impart knowledge to me than the knowledge which they tried to impart.

North America, South America, Europe—then back to North America and back to South America—then again, North America—then, after a South American hiatus of two years with no schooling whatsoever, a grand finale in North America leading up to the tremendous climax of an A.B. at Harvard—that in rough outline is the course of my variegated adventures in trying to escape 100 per cent ignorance. If I had stayed in one place long enough, I might have put up a much better fight; as it is, I am frequently both pained and shamed at the large areas inside me over which, despite all efforts of North American and South American and European pedagogues, ignorance still reigns supreme.

To illustrate the variegated nature of my education: I began studying Latin in Venezuela, continued my studies of that language in Bavaria, and finished them off in Massachusetts. As a result of this educational merry-go-round, I started off by calling the author of the *Orations Against Catiline* just plain Cicero,

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as if he were a mere part of Chicago. Then I called him, in the fashion of South America, *Ceeceroh*. Then I switched to the Teutonic version of his name, *Tsitsero*. Finally, I wound up in my native Boston with that awful name wished on him years ago by American teachers, *Kickero*. Fortunately, the Ybarra family did not take up residence, in those early and peripatetic years of my life, in Italy—if they had, I should have been obliged to add *Chitchero* to my already extensive collection.

From this scholastic hodgepodge I have emerged with a strong disinclination to spice my conversation with Latin quotations. The reason for this (quite aside from the fact that I am never sure that I can reel off any Latin sentence correctly from start to finish) is that I always hesitate as to whether I shall pronounce a Latin quotation as if it were straight English or clothe it in the garb of Venezuela. On one thing, however, I am adamant: I will *not* dress it in the garments prescribed for it by Massachusetts. Nobody, since I have been free from subservience to the schools of the Bay State, has ever heard me say *Wayny, weedy, weecky*. And nobody ever will!

The first endeavors by grown-ups to drill holes in my ignorance were made at the Bartlett Street Primary School, in Roxbury, Mass. Then Roxbury was, as it still is, a suburb of Boston. But in the days when I got my first schooling there, Roxbury was more conscious than it is now of the tremendous intellectual throbbings of the near-by Massachusetts metropolis—moreover, had not Oliver Wendell Holmes written about it fairly recently and did not Edward Everett Hale live in it? But Roxbury failed to do much for me, owing to a reason which in my family determined many abrupt changes in our general arrangements, viz., we suddenly went somewhere else.

On this occasion we went to Venezuela. There I entered the

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co-ed school at Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, run by Teresa Eduardo.

I am under the impression that Teresa and her satellites, female and male, shoveled considerable knowledge in my direction. But in part (probably) through their fault and in part (undoubtedly) through mine, there is only one fact about which I can say, with hand on heart, "*This* I learned at Teresa's"—the names of the Balearic Islands, a piece of learning which has added in after years neither to my grasp of the basic realities nor to my income.

At Teresa Eduardo's school there was a male teacher named Vicente Arévalo. His job was to try to teach arithmetic to a bevy of unruly maidens and disorderly brats. Vicente discovered in me a talent for mathematics—and he seemed to expect great things from it in the future.

When his arithmetic class stood up before him, it stood up in two sections—and there was a sharp line of demarcation between them. If he asked a question which no child in the first section could answer he would pass the question on to the second section; anyone who answered it there was permitted, in obedience to a rule made long before by Teresa Eduardo herself, to go not to the top of the class but only to the top of Section II.

One day this mark of unjust class distinction was too much for Vicente. He asked a question—something like "how much is twelve times eleven?" Nobody in Section I answered correctly. So he turned to Section II. I was located about halfway down that section. All the pupils ahead of me failed to give the right answer. I gave it.

"Go to the top of the class!" commanded Vicente Arévalo,

“LIST AND LEARN . . .”

in defiance of accepted tradition. I went to the top of Section II.

“Go to the top of the class, I tell you,” thundered Vicente.

I obeyed. I placed myself ahead of every pupil—even the biggest and oldest, who, until then, had occupied sacrosanct and inviolable precedence in Section I.

Section I was outraged. It appealed to Teresa. Teresa sided with tradition. But Vicente was inexorable.

“Tom’s answer was the only correct one,” he persisted, “so he must be at the head of the class—*of both sections.*” And there I remained until tumbled downward by some subsequent question.

Incidentally, the talent for mathematics which Vicente thought he had discovered in me has never raised its head again. And even in his day it never extended beyond the correct answer to “how much is twelve times twelve?” After that, having gotten into decimals and algebra and other hideous phases of education, I never saw another ray of light. But—I repeat proudly—until my education dragged me beyond “how much is twelve times twelve?” I was a paragon of mathematical achievement.

From the school of Teresa Eduardo I migrated to another educational ornament of the Caracas of my early boyhood, the Colegio Villegas. That’s where my introduction to the Latin language occurred. But, instead of remembering primarily the vagaries of Latin verbs imparted to me (amid ferocious roars of rage) by our irascible Latin teacher, Dr. Montenegro, I recall much more clearly the dirty white-washed walls of the schoolroom in which he imparted them—and the stout iron bars clamped, Spanish-fashion, to its windows—and the clouds

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of reddish powder which, rising from its brick floor and merging into its smelly atmosphere, caused me and the rest of the little boys wrestling miserably with the eccentricities of *amo-amas-amat* to sneeze with such frequency and thoroughness as to raise the irascibility of Dr. Montenegro to livid frenzy.

It was the same with other studies at the Colegio Villegas. Would that I might say: "Ah, how clearly I recall the days in those hallowed halls when, under the conscientious and disinterested guidance of venerable Dr. Villegas, that Venezuelan Pestalozzi-and-Dr.-Arnold-of-Rugby rolled into one, I was led away from the fetid darkness of ignorance into the dazzling glory of knowledge!" But I cannot. I most certainly cannot. What I remember most vividly about Dr. Villegas is how he used to chase his pupils all over the place in the interests not of general knowledge but of corporal punishment.

I don't know what course my education would have steered if the fortunes of the Ybarra family had become stabilized at the time when Dr. Montenegro and Dr. Villegas figured in my life. But the fortunes of the Ybarras in that early era of my existence seldom if ever did anything so humdrum. All hope that I might ever learn what my teachers at the Colegio Villegas were talking about was ended when my father—having again guessed wrong in a Venezuelan factional fight—abruptly departed from his native Venezuela, one jump ahead of his victorious enemies. I, too, jumped. So, eventually, did the rest of the Ybarras. But they—my mother and sister and brother—followed at least half a dozen jumps behind my father and myself, since it behooved my mother to pack trunks and lock the front door and see that the cat got a new home. After a brief stop (without benefit of education) in the United States, I

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found myself enrolled (age 12) at a private school in Munich, Bavaria, Germany.

It was an awful place. A fellow-American, William Brewster of Plymouth, Mass., shared with me its miseries and tortures. These were due principally to the fact that neither of us knew any German, which (when discovered by the surrounding Germans) added enormously to the active dislike that we had engendered at sight among teachers and pupils because of other un-Teutonic traits. William and I used to wander about in forlorn isolation. Everybody in the building vied with everybody else in making us feel that we had smallpox or leprosy or both.

Eventually our sufferings became such that our respective families abruptly severed our connection with the school. William went off to Dresden to continue his education, while I was turned over to a youth whom I shall call Ludwig Schwanthaler, *Kand. Jur.* (that means candidate for the degree of doctor of law) a preternaturally solemn student at the University of Munich.

Thereafter, for many weeks, Schwanthaler used to come around to our apartment every weekday and impart education to me for a couple of hours each time. As he could not speak a word of anything except his native language, I soon learned a considerable hunk of it for the simple reason that, in my dealings with him, I had either to speak to him in German or hold my tongue. I can imagine no more efficacious way of imparting linguistic knowledge to a boy of twelve with a strong prejudice against silence. Within a few weeks after our first meeting my tutor and I were conversing amicably in German on a remarkable variety of subjects.

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I can see now the spacious square corner room of our flat in which my serious young tutor officiated. It had two big windows, through which the sun poured in on pleasant days. They afforded glimpses of the leisurely street life of the Munich of the 1890's. It was a city of pretty parks and friendly beer gardens and little horsecars painted light blue, the Bavarian national color, and drawn by a lone horse—big, placid and well fed. Somebody told my mother that the horses of the Munich tramway company worked only one hour and a half a day.

"Well, now I know what to be if I come back to earth in a second incarnation," she said.

One day my mother decided that it behooved a descendant of New England ancestors largely composed of conscience to find out how I was getting along in my studies. So she waylaid Schwanthaler as he was leaving our apartment.

"What do you think of Tom?" she asked.

The solemn youth, having brought himself from his heels upward to an attitude of stiff military attention, after the manner of the least comfortable subdivision of the human race, fired at my mother—point-blank—this blast:

"*Er ist furchtbar leichtsinnig und kolossal zerstreut!*" ("He is fearfully careless and colossally scatterbrained!") That cured my mother's curiosity for some time!

Ludwig Schwanthaler, *Kand. Jur.*, was a versatile youth. In addition to teaching me the rudiments of the German language, he also gave me lessons in Latin, arithmetic, and history. The history imparted by him to me was composed largely of the ups and downs in the course of centuries of his native Bavaria—and in his lessons there was no more than a cursory mention of Prussia or of the Prussia-dominated German Empire in which he taught and I learned. In those days, Bavarians—although

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they had been stuffed bodily by Bismarck, at the close of the Franco-German War, into the German Empire of the Hohenzollerns—still felt strongly that they were Bavarians first, Germans afterward, and Prussians not at all.

The public squares of Munich were adorned with statues of strictly Bavarian heroes; the corridors enclosing the Hofgarten, the pleasant little park in front of the Bavarian royal palace, were covered with historical paintings of strictly Bavarian episodes; the art galleries of the city were rich in enormous canvases of Duke This or King That of Bavaria making a big dent in his epoch, to the detriment of all other European lands, including those which afterward entered, with varying degrees of willingness or reluctance, into the Hohenzollern Empire.

There was in the Bavaria of those days a distinct dislike of Prussia. “*Wir hassen die Preussen*” (“We hate the Prussians”) was a sentiment frequently heard in conversations with Bavarians. At no point during the period when he was in charge of my education did my young tutor make the slightest attempt to conceal what was thought locally about Prussia and all its works—nor to veil from me the glories of Bavaria, which to him was still one of the proud kingdoms of Europe, although its royal family had been shorn of everything except glittering externals by that steam-rolling servant of the Hohenzollerns, the Iron Chancellor.

As a result of this mental attitude of my tutor, the selections from history imparted by him to me were strikingly lacking in information on what had occurred in past centuries in every part of Germany except Bavaria—and topheavy with minute details about Louis the Bavarian and Henry the Lion and the Blacksmith of Kochel and other local notables of the past who, as the Spaniards say, were “*muy conocidos en su casa*”—

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("very well known in their own homes") but practically out of the picture in all parts of the world situated more than two hundred miles from Munich.

On one memorable occasion, Schwanthaler—having clicked his heels before my mother and obtained from her the requisite permission—arranged a little excursion for himself and me to Freising, the principal town of the Bavarian district in which he had been born. The arrangement was that he should go to Freising by train and await my arrival there on my bicycle. The distance from Munich was some twenty miles, which was nothing to me in those days, for I was a hardy and tough-muscled little bicyclist, filled with a burning desire to pedal indefinitely in any direction out of Munich whenever I got an opportunity. Schwanthaler was immensely proud of Freising. What he had told me about it had given me the distinct impression that it produced most of this world's virtues, set aside what it needed for itself, and then exported the small surplus for distribution to the remainder of the universe.

I came pedaling into the main square of Freising on schedule. My tutor was awaiting me at the town's leading beer dispensary. Soon after greeting him I pointed to a lot of those fuzzy little cushions on which beer mugs repose, when beer-guzzlers pause between swigs, and expressed surprise that they should be deemed safe on the ledge of the ground-floor window of that dispensary, where they were drying in the sun within easy reach of any passerby unimpressed by the sanctity of *mein* and *tuum*.

Schwanthaler, having recovered from his astonishment that ignorance like mine could exist, remarked in frozen tones:

"In Freising nobody ever steals anything!"

After a while the versatility of my tutor became so apparent

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that my mother asked him whether he would undertake to teach me physics.

“*Ja, gnädige Frau,*” replied that undaunted scion of Bavaria, with superb self-confidence. So, next day, having bought for the Ybarra account a lot of mysterious gadgets, he told me sepulchrally that he would prove to me some leading physical law—which one I have completely forgotten—physics and I have never hit it off.

Schwanthaler thereupon put some smelly stuff into a little pan and placed the pan on top of a sputtering flame which he had lighted.

“Now,” he announced impressively, “you will see how, in accordance with the immutable law governing. . . .” At this point the apparatus blew up in his face. Further elucidation by that solemn young man of the mysteries of physics was abruptly cut short.

Fortunately neither of us was injured. But this mishap aroused in my mother a certain skepticism as to whether Ludwig Schwanthaler, *Kand. Jur.*, was qualified to teach physics. I remember no further experiments by him with that little pan or the smelly stuff he had bought to put into it or the sputtering flame which he had placed underneath it. We returned to the history of Bavaria.

Chapter III

"Stick Close to Your Desks . . ."

AFTER about a year as a pupil of Schwanthaler I took the variegated and disorderly section of my education drilled into me from Munich back to the United States. Considerable ingenuity was needed to fit my large stock of peculiar information into the requirements of non-Bavarian schools. Many of the things about which I was best informed, I soon found out, had practically no market value in American scholastic circles—particularly Bavarian dukes. Eventually, however, I succeeded in making some sort of adjustment between Munich and Massachusetts.

My schooling was too scattered to give me any strong feeling for any one of the phases of my early education. Only by making an effort can I remember anything whatsoever about the Bartlett Street Primary School in Roxbury, Mass. Teresa Eduardo's in Caracas—though filled in its day with excitement—never arouses in me that sort of retrospection which is prefaced in later years by graduates with the words, uttered in a far-away tone: "When I was at dear old . . ."

It's the same with the Colegio Villegas. At that hectic institution I came into contact with excitement and activity of such color and vigor as to invest all that had gone before at Teresa's with the pallor of child-like innocence. But at no point—either while I was a student there or in subsequent years, during my most sentimental periods of glancing fondly backward

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at happy school days—have I felt the slightest inclination to announce, with a furtive dab at suddenly moistened eyes: “I could die for dear old Villegas!” The Colegio Villegas simply didn’t hit one that way. As for that school in Munich—if only I might forget it forever!

Nor did my long stretch of tuition at Munich under Ludwig Schwanthaler, *Kand. Jur.*, ever fill me with a yearning to make a pilgrimage to the site of the apartment where he tried to teach me physics by exploding physical apparatus in my face, or to the room in which he had informed my mother that I was *furchtbar leichtsinnig und kolossal zerstreut*.

The first fruit of the adjustment between Munich and Massachusetts was my enrollment as a pupil in the Roxbury Latin School. I ought to have felt all puffed up with pride because Roxbury Latin was (and still is) the oldest school in the United States. But at this stage of my career I proved most disappointing as an absorber and respecer of tradition.

I know exactly what the Roxbury Latin School looked like. I remember perfectly well the name of the street on which it was situated. I can recite the names of several of its teachers, from its august head master, William C. Collar (called by us boys, of course, William Cuff Collar) downward. But for the life of me I can’t remember what the Roxbury Latin School taught me. One thing I *do* know, however—it tried (and failed) to teach me botany. Through a dreary succession of leaden-footed hours I listened to one of its pedagogues describe, in highly complimentary terms, an enormous number of flowers. Yet I have salvaged from all that he said only two words—*stamen* and *pistil*. And all I know about either is that you can’t (worse luck!) put a bullet into the second and fire it at a botanist!

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At the Roxbury Latin School I was a student for only one year. This may explain why I did not get more of a thrill out of remembering that, on a famous June day in 1775, Joseph Warren, then a teacher at the school, dismissed his class early to shoulder his musket and go forth to die at the battle of Bunker Hill. There were spells of boredom while I was studying at Roxbury Latin which would have made early dismissal by my teachers (the earlier the better), for any reason at all, a source of boundless delight. And the violent death of those teachers, on Bunker Hill or anywhere else in the universe, would have seemed to me a cause for tremendous cheering.

From Roxbury, Mass. I moved across the Charles River to Cambridge, Mass. I became a student at the Cambridge Latin School. In those days it was housed not in the lordly building of later phases of its existence but in an ugly brick structure, bearing a marked family resemblance to a firetrap, in Cambridgeport.

I really *do* remember some of the things taught me at Cambridge Latin. But—alas!—I don't remember them half so well as I do the complicated piano introductions with which a star pupil of the First Class—who excelled in music as well as in everything else—used to preface our mass singing of hymns every morning before we started our lessons. In those long introductions of his he used to get into such a bog of counterpoint as to make it seem doubtful whether he could ever extricate himself—and still more doubtful whether the rest of us would ever get a chance to burst into song. Meanwhile, Old Brad (as we called Mr. Bradbury, our head master, a savant of immense local renown) looked as if he intended, if the star pupil didn't stop playing soon, to resort to physical violence. And the rest of us sniggered in shameless abandon.

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Another thing that I recall from Cambridge Latin days so vividly that it has dimmed in my memory Latin verbs and Greek particles and algebraic roots is a remark made by “Teddy” Adams, the teacher who presided over the First Class. He was telling us how the Bostonians of the middle of the nineteenth century had created Boston’s famous Back Bay district on “made” land.

“Yes,” said Teddy, scornfully—taking time out from his regular work of teaching us something or other—“those Bostonians went and filled in a lot of swamp for the Back Bay—though they had *the entire American Continent as far as San Francisco to build it on!*”

The school which came nearest to doing for me what schools ought to do for a boy was the Cambridge Latin. For one thing, I stayed at the Cambridge Latin for three full years. Moreover, while I was there, teachers of high ability and strong personality struggled with me: Jennie Spring, firm and fine and human; “Teddy” Adams, who wove into whatever he taught dry humor and salty common sense; and, first and foremost, William F. Bradbury, arch-type of a bygone vintage of pedagogues—Brad the Formidable, Brad the Ferocious. As I look back across the years, he seems to me to have been a sort of terrestrial Jove, who always kept behind his frigid eyes half-kindled fires of anger, and always filled the capacious pockets of his coat, when he started of a morning from home for school, with small, medium, and large-sized Jovian thunderbolts.

It was at the Cambridge Latin School that I first got meat out of Shakespeare—my first reading there of *Macbeth* is a bright beacon of memory. It was at Cambridge Latin that Virgil first spoke to me—though I must confess that, in listening to him, I did a pretty poor job.

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It was at Cambridge Latin that Alexandre Dumas, père revealed to me the magic of sheer narrative. Fascinated by his genius, I used to read *La Tulipe Noire* far beyond the daily stint assigned to us boys and girls by Jennie Spring. I used to trust altogether too much to knowledge of Spanish in my eagerness to keep my clandestine progress from being hampered by having to look up the meaning of French nouns or French verbs.

On one occasion, I remember, Jennie called upon me suddenly—when, in complete absorption, I was reading a chapter far ahead of what she had prescribed for that day's lesson—to translate from *La Tulipe Noire*.

"Begin at the top of the page . . ." commanded Jennie.

I began there. My translation was at sight. I hadn't given one minute to preparation. The passage which I was trying to put into English told how an enormous mob, howling in murderous frenzy, was pursuing the fleeing Jean and Corneille De Witt—a mob of which the first waves—*les premières vagues*—were already surging around a corner close on the heels of the doomed brothers.

"The mob," I said, hesitantly, "*of which the first vague members. . .*"

"Sit down," said Jennie Spring.

For some time after that I prepared my daily stint from Dumas with loving solicitude, because Jennie took the greatest glee in calling upon me for translations in and out of my turn. But that didn't keep me from finishing *La Tulipe Noire* miles ahead of my nearest competitor.

I used to act similarly, by the way, when endeavors were made (not at school but at home) to teach me how to play the piano. My line of behavior infuriated the unfortunate women

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who tried to teach me. So impatient was I to play the bare melody of everything brought to my notice that I brazenly ignored the left-hand accompaniment and even most of the chords prescribed for the right hand, if they were the least bit complicated. The result often was a brand of unearthly cacophony which makes me feel, as I hear them in retrospect, that I was born before my time. It arouses in me the suspicion that teachers of today, had they been confronted with those sounds, might have imagined themselves the Columbuses of an ultra-extreme modern musical genius.

My elders soon gave up in despair the hope of making a pianist out of me. And never, in my subsequent life, have I felt—any more than I have when I turn the eyes of my mind back to the various schools which I attended—an irresistible urge to revisit the spots on which the pianos of my boyhood were installed. Nor have I ever felt within me a fervent desire to die for Doloritas Urdaneta or Petra Tovar of Caracas, for Fräulein Alexandra Vogl of Munich, or Miss Dame of Cambridge—the patient ladies who tried to instill musical proficiency into my rebellious fingers.

No matter in what school or in what country I happened to be, two things soon became apparent: my strong leaning toward journalism and my strong penchant for scribbling verses.

The earliest manifestation of the journalist lurking inside me occurred in Caracas, Venezuela, when I was ten years old and a pupil at Teresa Eduardo's. The whirligig of Venezuelan politics, having taken a sudden whirl advantageous to General Alejandro Ybarra, had whirled him out of exile in Boston into political prominence in Caracas, out of the coffee-importing business into the august post of Military Governor of Caracas.

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That brought him a complete set of fine uniforms, a sudden rush of nauseating adulation, and hoarse shouts of "Attention! Shoulder arms!" from officers in command of squads of guards outside barracks and other military establishments, whenever he strode or rode past them.

I was enormously interested by the military pomp which had suddenly enveloped General Ybarra. But my interest, as I look back on those days, does not seem to have gone hand in hand with awe. This was clearly shown by my first incursion into journalism.

That incursion consisted in getting hold of some thick sheets of brown wrapping paper and producing thereon several issues of a newspaper for home consumption. I called this newspaper—why I do not know—El Güirirí (pronounced Gwee-ree-ree), that being the name of a sort of crane or heron, an inhabitant of Venezuela's forests primeval, mentioned pleasantly by my father in some of his innumerable good stories of early campaigning experiences. My conception of the main function of El Güirirí (which was written throughout in pencil, in Spanish) was to make it the vehicle of violent editorial attacks on General Alejandro Ybarra—received by him with much laughter and no feeling at all that I should be chastised for unfilial impudence.

One day, in talking about the United States with his nephew Santiago Ybarra (then a man-about-town aged around 21), my father announced that, in American politics, he was a Mugwump. He made it clear to Santiago that my mother's native Massachusetts had not made him a Republican, nor (a far more natural evolution, in view of the tons of Republican lore dumped upon him in Boston and Plymouth) a Democrat.

For some mysterious reason this confession from General

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Ybarra greatly shocked the editor of *El Güirirí*—so much so that the next issue of that organ of my personal opinions consisted almost entirely of a terrific attack on my father because of his Mugwumpism. I professed to find his straddle-the-fence policy a disgrace not only to himself but to our whole family. And I said so, with scalding childish invective, all over my brown wrapping-paper front page. But it was not the molten language unloosed in that leading editorial of mine which most impressed the grown-ups around me—it was the casual, contemptuous, and totally uncalled-for way in which I alluded in my opening sentence to my cousin Santiago.

Prefacing my editorial view of my father's confession of lack of North American political faith, I wrote: “General Alejandro Ybarra, in conversation with *un tal Santiago*. . . .” Those last three words sent the adult Ybarras into convulsions of merriment. The reason for their mirth was that *un tal Santiago* means in Spanish something much more derogatory than its literal translation, which is “a certain Santiago.” It connotes, instead, something of the general nature of “an individual known as Santiago,” or “an individual calling himself Santiago,” or even “a man known to the police under the alias of Santiago.” Long after my anti-Mugwump diatribe was forgotten, my cousin was nicknamed in our family circle, *un tal Santiago*. And he never stopped wondering why, without any traceable reason (he was always a favorite with me), I had suddenly introduced him into the columns of *El Güirirí* under that insulting appellation.

Later, when I was at the Roxbury Latin School, a North American cousin of mine, at whose house I was staying, co-operated with me in my next venture in journalism. It was called—prophetically it seems to me, in view of my long con-

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nection with its majestic New York namesake—The Roxbury Times. It died an early death. The only thing about it that sticks in my memory is how my North American cousin and I once blazoned across the right-hand half of our front page in screaming big letters the words *L A T E S T N E W S ! ! !* and appended the following, written in lettering so small as to be scarcely legible: "*So late it hasn't arrived yet.*"

Incidentally, speaking of the prophetic nature of the title of that Roxbury house organ, it wasn't half so prophetic as something said by Jessie Sullivan, our cockney-Irish maid-of-all-work, who lived in the Ybarra family for more than a quarter of a century. Jessie had a genius for getting words wrong. Alluding to my first productions on the first writing machine which ever swam into my ken, Jessie remarked: "Thomas is at his *tripewriter* again. . . ." In view of the basic character of the overwhelming majority of my journalistic-literary productions, that statement by Jessie—but I think I'll drop this unpalatable line of reminiscence here and now.

The scene of my third journalistic venture was Cambridge, Mass. While I was studying at the Cambridge Latin School, I circulated among the Ybarras—then domiciled on Waterhouse Street, which forms one side of Cambridge Common—another newspaper, written, like its Caracas predecessor, in longhand, but, unlike El Güirirí, in English.

In that era, graphophones were the latest of mechanical miracles. They had wormed themselves into many American homes and were investing themselves with an aura faintly resembling that of the radio of today. They had also come into special prominence in New England because telephone companies (including the one serving Boston and Cambridge) had installed them at exchanges in order to save switchboard girls



The author as a schoolboy at the Cambridge Latin School

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the trouble of telling you when you had called a busy number. Instead, your ear was suddenly assailed by the following strange chant, apparently emanating from a robot with a stomach ache: "The graphophone says the line is busy, please call again—the graphophone says the line is busy, please call again"—repeated *ad infinitum* or thereabouts. Deeply impressed by all this, I called my newspaper The Graphophone. At its masthead it bore this remarkable statement: "Subscribers will please name their terms to the editor. No subscriber will be paid in advance."

Like El Güirirí, The Graphophone thought that its main reason for existence was to poke fun at the adults of my family—particularly at my father. The latter, true to the traditions of Venezuela, detested the cold weather of Massachusetts and invariably pronounced the English word *you* thus: *joo*. To bring home to my readers these twin idiosyncrasies I ran the following imaginary interview with my irascible parent:

"General, what would you say to me if I should announce that your favorite month was December?"

"JULY!"

In The Graphophone I used to conduct a question-and-answer column. It necessitated frequent demands on my mother for queries. One day she gave me this one: "What color was the cloak which Sir Walter Raleigh threw into the mud puddle at the feet of Queen Elizabeth?" In its next issue, The Graphophone came out with the following: "Do you mean before or after he threw it into the puddle?"

When I was 18 years old, the Ybarras, again yielding to their ingrained migratory habits, transferred themselves from Cambridge, Mass. back to Caracas, Venezuela. There, succumbing once more to my journalistic urge, I started to publish still an-

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other paper. This one, unlike its predecessors, was written not in longhand but on a typewriter (on the machine, in fact, of which Jessie Sullivan had spoken with such devastating insight into the future). I named my new sheet *The Bird of Paradise*—because, when it was born, we were living in a suburb of Caracas called *El Paraíso*, which, in Spanish, means paradise.

The editorial policy of *The Bird of Paradise* was, to put it mildly, fresh. A leading aristocrat of Caracas, Don Gerónimo Rivas, was at that time experimenting with a new kind of cement for building houses of which he used to boast frequently and lengthily to all whom he encountered. Finally, he brought to completion a house in *El Paraíso* made of the marvelous stuff. Ignoring both the social eminence of the builder and the immense admiration aroused on all sides by the realization of his dreams, the next issue of *The Bird of Paradise* announced in its Social Notes: "Don Gerónimo Rivas's handsome new mud house is ready for occupancy."

Those were the days of the Boer War. It opened, as delvers into history will remember, with a series of British reverses. So *The Bird of Paradise*, in chronicling the arrival at Capetown of General Sir Redvers Buller to take command of the retreating British forces, remarked: "General Buller proceeded at once to the front, *which he found considerably nearer than he had expected.*" Readers of *The Bird* were also regaled with dispatches from "our gallant war correspondent," an individual purportedly sent by me at vast expense to cover the fighting front. Unfortunately, at the climax of a decisive battle, he abruptly resigned and started home, because, as he put it: "I suddenly realized that bullets were wandering about all over the place without any visible means of restraint."

It was while I was at the Cambridge Latin School that both

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my journalistic urge and my itch to write verse first came out into the open—that is, ventured beyond the necessarily limited audience of our family circle. Pupils of that school helped to publish a monthly periodical called *The Cambridge High and Latin School Review*. I used surreptitiously to slip both prose and verse into a receptacle like a mail box set aside for contributions to the *Review*. Several of these productions promptly appeared in its columns—to my great delight.

So modest was I in those early days that I felt willing to go on writing anonymously until far into the future, with no vestige of desire to have anybody know who was the author of my articles or poems. But one of the editors of the *Review* discovered my secret and I was—to my horror—elected Class Poet and commanded by Brad to write the Class Poem for my class graduation. It was with much difficulty that my mother kept me from jumping into the Charles River; and with still more difficulty that she persuaded me, in the teeth of stentorian hollering on my part, to write that Class Poem. Her efforts, I recall, were efficaciously backed by a bribe of five dollars offered by my grandmother.

Eventually, after acute birth-pangs, the Poem was born. It was awful. My mother and grandmother lied heroically about it. Everybody else who saw it yearned for nothing so much as not to see it again. Indeed, the unanimity with which they expressed their opinion of its striking lack of merit reminds me of what a friend of mine said years afterward about a young lady whom he did not like: “A virgin—by acclamation!”

That Class Poem, however, did not deter me from writing more and still more verses.

Chapter IV

"Prithee, Pretty Maiden . . ."

I HAVE always admired the technique adopted by Messieurs Jules Barbier and Michel Carré in fashioning the libretto around which Jacques Offenbach draped the music of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. In the Paris of their time, Messieurs Barbier and Carré were, to put it baldly, hacks. But, in carpentering for Offenbach the renowned yarns of that eccentric Teuton E.T.A. Hoffmann, they rose above themselves. They hit upon a method of dramatic presentation of the framework for Offenbach's score which, I surmise, is partly responsible for the merit of the tunes that the Parisian from Frankfurt bestowed upon his Hoffmann opera—including that sorely overworked barcarolle, the playing of which has become in many restaurants almost as ordinary an occurrence as the serving of food and drink.

Briefly, Offenbach's librettists did this: they pulled together into effective drama the disparate elements of some of Hoffmann's bizarre tales by the adroit way in which they handled their first and last acts.

In Act I we see Hoffmann—hero of his own drama—in his favorite tavern, surrounded by boon companions. He is morose and silent. His friends rally him.

"What's the matter?" they ask, crowding around him, wine glasses in their hands.

"I'm thinking about the most memorable loves of my life."

"Tell us about them."

“PRITHEE, PRETTY MAIDEN . . .”

“All right.”

Hoffmann sets down his glass. He rises from his seat. The revelers are suddenly hushed. They lean forward expectantly. Hoffmann announces:

“La première, c’était Olympia!”

Abruptly the curtain falls.

Then follow several episodes in Hoffmann’s amorous life. Each shows him in the midst of a love affair. Each, to give it the needed touch of finality, is separated from the episode preceding it and from the episode following it by the dropping of the curtain—as if to denote its immense importance at the time that it happened and its utter insignificance just as soon as it was over. Each is an act in itself.

But it is in their last act that Messieurs Barbier and Carré rise to a veritable pinnacle of clever dramatic artifice. As the curtain rises for the last time, Hoffmann is shown—

But I’m rushing matters. Everything in its time and place.

I propose to recount, in imitation of the Barbier-and-Carré method, certain episodes of my own life, in which pretty damsels played star parts.

Behold! I rise from an imaginary chair beside an imaginary table in an imaginary tavern. I lift high over my head an imaginary wine glass. To an imaginary company of suddenly hushed fellow-revelers, I proclaim:

“La première, c’était Lorlé!”

An imaginary curtain falls.

It rises on the Munich of the 1890’s. That Munich gave no inkling of the Munich of coming years; of the Munich of “appeasement”; of the Munich of luckless Neville Chamberlain, shielding his body from the elements by means of an umbrella

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of cloth and shielding his mind from realities by means of another umbrella of credulity and unworldliness.

It was a Munich with no thought of Adolf Hitler, then an unmoustached three-year-old brat in Braunau, to whom the universe was paying no attention whatsoever—which was a break for the brat. It was a Munich wholly unaware that one of its many beer cellars was to be the birthplace of the Nazi party; that one of its many narrow streets was to see the collapse of the Hitler-Ludendorff Putsch of 1923; that many of its citizens were to be transformed into the core of the Nazidom of a grim and bloodstained future.

It was a Munich far removed from conflict—exactly halfway between the Franco-German War and the First World War; a Munich living in somnolent peace; a Munich exuding a peculiar charm native to itself. That charm was compounded of strangely incongruous ingredients—paunchy heaviness and light-winged wit—stodginess and pleasant ways of living—beer and art. All this merged into an attractiveness to which a host of Americans of the nineties of the last century, who could not bear Berlin and Prussia, fell willing victims—an attractiveness to which, among other places in the Germany of that pre-Hitler, pre-Nazi, pre-aggression era, only Dresden brought effective American-enticing competition.

Into that vanished Munich the Ybarras were suddenly projected. My father—as on other occasions in his agitated career as a Venezuelan general dabbling incorrigibly in Venezuela's disorderly politics—had picked the loser in a Venezuelan civil war—as I have already narrated. As a result of this lamentable *faux pas*, he had been compelled (you will remember) to skip at high speed out of Caracas, his home town—accompanied by

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me, aged twelve. In the United States the rest of the family—my Bostonian mother and my young sister and still younger brother—having left Caracas at a more dignified tempo, effected a junction with the Ybarra vanguard. And the exciting question arose: where were we to live until another political upheaval in Venezuela obligingly enabled my father to go home again?

Eventually it was decided that General Ybarra must again become—as he had several times before—an importer of Venezuelan coffee and cocoa and chocolate in my mother’s Boston, while the rest of us were to cross the Atlantic and reside (until the clouds rolled by) in Europe. A few years earlier, my widowed American grandmother and her two daughters, my mother’s sisters, had temporarily abandoned their native Massachusetts in order to undertake a quest with a twofold goal: to find a place where they could live comfortably on the meager money left to them by my deceased American grandfather and to do so in the midst of Art with an enormous A. After a preliminary sojourn in Rome, they were now tackling Munich.

So it was to Munich that the Ybarras transferred themselves.

We crossed the ocean on a steamship which, in the leisurely fashion of the 1890’s, conveyed us from Hoboken to Genoa. From the latter port—again in leisurely fashion—we proceeded via Milan and Verona to Munich. There my grandmother and my two aunts met us at what was then known as the *Centralbahnhof*.

Since those far-away days, Munich, having developed along truculent Aryan-Nordic lines, has decided that the word *Central* (even when Nordic-Aryanized into *Zentral*) looks disgracefully Mediterranean. So the Munich *Centralbahnhof* has

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had its name transformed into *Hauptbahnhof*, thus making it fit for enunciation by Aryan-Nordic lips. In 1892, however, the Bavarians felt more Bavarian than German; and they weren't trying half so hard as they tried later to forget that the reason for their having a king was that Napoleon Bonaparte had graciously buttoned royal honors onto the current Bavarian duke of his period. So, as I have said, the train bearing the Ybarras of 1892 rolled into the *Centralbahnhof* of Munich. Incidentally, the route followed by us to Munich—via Genoa, Milan, and Verona—enabled me for years to say: "I've been in Italy but never in Venice or Rome or Naples"—which used to elicit from those who heard me the obvious query: "Well, where the devil *did* you go?"

My father, having installed us in an apartment on the Karlsplatz, in the heart of the Bavarian metropolis—just behind a bronze statue of Goethe with a look on his face suggesting that the Muse was tickling him behind the ear with a feather—hurried gloomily back to Boston to see that the Bostonians were adequately supplied with Venezuelan coffee and cocoa and chocolate.

The lesser Ybarras celebrated the family change of base by unanimously contracting scarlet fever. That brought them the ministrations of a long, blond Teutonic doctor who—since he hailed from Suabia—we promptly dubbed Spactzle, that being the name of a sort of chopped-up Yorkshire pudding, highly esteemed by us, which, according to German folk-lore, was invented by the Suabians.

Spactzle was a solemn individual, but he wasn't quite so solemn as he looked. While I was ailing, I decided, by some obscure process of childish reasoning, that freckles were loathsome and obscene things. So I begged my mother to ask Spactzle

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what I should do to eliminate them from the bridge of my nose.

“Tell Tom to wear a veil,” chuckled Spaetzle. That ended my anti-freckles campaign.

Spaetzle used to talk learnedly about a swelling on the side of my neck, one of the by-products of my scarlet fever.

“It is in the *glande maxillaire*,” he said grimly. That caused me to realize instantly—again by some mysterious process of child’s reasoning—that a pet salamander which had just been presented to us must necessarily bear the name *Maxillaire*. I think that my mother got her first gray hairs trying to keep our doctor from discovering the name of that sinuous and repulsive pet of ours—also the nickname by which he himself was invariably known when he wasn’t around. (It was Spaetzle, by the way, who recommended Ludwig Schwanthaler, *Kand. Jur.*, as a tutor for me.)

When my scarlet fever had run its course, my mother decided that I needed some sort of a tonic, in order that I might be built up again into robust health. So she consulted Spaetzle on the subject. With much solemnity he said to her:

“Madame! If you desire, I can prescribe for Tom some regular medicine, full of iron and all that sort of thing, which will doubtless soon fatten him up and make him as well as he was before he got his scarlet fever. Say the word, Madame! If you *must* have such a prescription, so be it! But, before I give such a tonic to Tom, I want to tell you something.

“Madame! The best thing in Munich is Munich beer. There is no beer like it in the world. It is an excellent tonic. We prescribe it for all sorts of troubles—especially for building up adults and also children who have been weakened by disease. Now, of course, you, being a foreigner, may be prejudiced against letting Tom drink beer. If you are, well and good. I shall

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say no more. I shall sit right down and prescribe a conventional medicine such as Tom would get in the United States. But I repeat (here Spaetzle's voice took on added solemnity): the best thing in Munich is Munich beer. I would like Tom to drink a little every day. Madame! Which is it to be—medicine or beer?"

"Beer!" said my mother instantly.

"Good!" Spaetzle's voice overflowed with Bavarian satisfaction. "Please get Tom a little quarter-liter mug and send out every day to the *Englisches Café* across the street—they have good beer there—and get it filled."

My mother saw to it that Spaetzle's convivial instructions were obeyed. Every day a maid went across to the *Englisches Café* and returned with a quarter of a liter of Munich's renowned beverage. Such a small quantity was practically unknown in Munich; few Munichers bothered with less than a half-liter mug at a time. Indeed, most of them drank their beer out of enormous mugs holding an entire liter. My mother had to go on a special shopping tour to get that diminutive mug. Eventually, I think, she bought it in a toy shop—or, maybe, she got it in a shop dealing in rare curios.

After I had been in Munich a few months I met Lorle.

Lorle (both syllables are pronounced, thus: Lor-leh) was the twelve-year-old daughter of a major in the Bavarian army who, as a young lieutenant, had fought in the Franco-German War. The major had a neatly trimmed black beard and a courtly manner. It was grand to see him and my father trying to outdo each other in politeness over a game of billiards, in the brief weeks of General Ybarra's Munich sojourn. "After you, Major—" "You first, General—" they were a regular Bavarian Alphonse and Venezuelan Gaston.

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Lorle had beautiful dark eyes. Her hair fell over her shoulders in two long pigtails. She taught eight-year-old Leonor, my sister, and three-year-old Alejandro, my brother, peculiar Teutonic games. One of these portrayed the tribulations brought on an ill-starred little girl called Mariechen by her wicked brother Rudolf. The participants in the game solemnly sang and acted out verse after verse, to a lugubrious little ditty, showing how Mariechen went step by step to her doom at the hands of Rudolf.

In Verse XII or thereabouts Rudolf was supposed to stab Mariechen fatally with a long knife. This verse was sung with much dramatic action and tragic implication. But the next, coming just after the realistic acting by Lorle and Leonor and Alejandro of the assassination of Mariechen, told in blithe words that in spite of her tragic demise all was well because

*“Mariechen ward ein Engelein,
Und Rudolf ward ein Bengelein.”*

(“Mariechen became a little angel
and Rudolf became a little devil.”)

“D’rum wollen wir alle lustig sein, lustig sein, lustig sein!”
 (“So let’s all be joyful!”) caroled Lorle and Leonor and Alejandro, abandoning themselves to a gleeful dance. My mother thought that both the assassination and the ensuing hilarity were pretty rough on Mariechen. But the performers couldn’t see it that way.

Lorle had a sixteen-year-old brother named August—called in Bavarian fashion Gustl—upon whom I lavished a fourteen-year-old’s hero worship. This was due partly to Gustl’s sterling qualities, but more (I realize now) to his close relationship to the pig-tailed star of my dreams.

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Gustl, like innumerable other German boys, was an ardent hiker. At that idyllic time there was no Hitler Jugend in Germany—none of those grueling hikes, by exhausted little brown-shirted lads, staggering along mile after mile, in an ordeal of mystical Nazi consecration to future bloody fields of battle. Hiking in the Bavaria of my early boyhood was a pastime with no mystic Aryan-Nordic meaning attached—and there was an enormous amount of this unconsecrated rambling all around me. It was resolved in family council that a moderate dose of it would do me good.

So “der Tom” sallied forth under the wing of Gustl—with Lorle waving farewell from her balcony—in order to explore portions of Bavaria lying near Munich. The first part was easy—we rode on a train. Then came a couple of miles of not too strenuous footwork, ending up at the ancient monastery of Andechs, where pensive monks in monastic robes and sandals served us black bread and beer.

After that—entirely without previous warning—Gustl wished on me a hike of some five miles. To me it seemed like fifty. Enjoyment abruptly ceased for me after the first mile or so, when Gustl, having looked at his watch, casually remarked that if we were to catch the last train back to Munich that day we must hurry.

We hurried. Gustl did not lose the train. But he almost lost me. He hauled me, spent and gray with dust, into a third-class compartment of the Munich train—with only a couple of minutes to spare. Dead beat, I collapsed into a far corner. But Gustl was as chipper as you please. He was a born Bavarian foot-slogger.

Years afterward he went on a solo mountain climb in the Bavarian Alps and fell off one of them. The fall was as fatal

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to him as wicked brother Rudolf's knife was to poor Mariechen. I hope that nobody in Munich, when the news arrived, did a dance of rejoicing to celebrate the fact that Gustl had become a little angel and the aforesaid Bavarian Alp a little devil.

Spurred on by calf-love, I tagged in a moonstruck trance after Lorle and Leonor as they played with their toys and told each other their secrets. Now and then I would entice them into the rougher realm of boys' games. During one springtime Lorle's family and mine were staying at a country hotel in Nymphenburg, just outside Munich. This hotel had a small private amusement park attached to it which was much frequented afternoons and especially Sundays by throngs of the Munich bourgeoisie.

One of the park's main attractions was a miniature tunnel, through which a miniature railway car ran down an incline, amid Stygian darkness and piercing squeals from female Munichers. On weekday mornings the park was deserted; we children could romp all over it.

One morning, wishing to acquire merit in Lorle's eyes, I invited her and Leonor to take a ride on the tunnel car. I found it at the foot of the incline and pushed it by main force—it was very light—to the top. But when I started, from where I stood on the track, to put on the brake, in order to keep the car stationary while I went to fetch the girls, something went wrong. The handle of the brake whirled around and gave me a tremendous whack on the side of my head. Fortunately, I kept my feet—otherwise the car would have run over me.

Scrambling from the track to the car's front platform, I finally put the brake on. Then I presented myself suddenly, out of the blackness of the tunnel, before Lorle and my sister, with blood streaming over my face from a deep cut on my left

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temple. Both little girls screamed. In Lorle's scream I imagined that I detected something more than mere shock and sympathy—and so buoyed up was I by that delicious reflection that I was positively stoical when Spaetzle took several stitches in the side of my forehead. Then he wound yards and yards of tape around my head—and the way Lorle glanced at this decoration and into the two eyes situated under that battered skull of mine, and her sympathetic exclamations at the memory of my narrow escape, filled me with ecstatic bliss. But, after the tape had been taken off my skull, the memory of the accident grew dim in Lorle's mind, and her sympathetic exclamations abruptly ceased. But I did not dash into the tunnel again in order to get myself a duplicate wallop on the other temple. There is a limit—even in calf-love.

When the Ybarras were slated to leave Munich and return to the United States, I wandered listlessly about, in awful gloom. Once, after my departure, Lorle wrote to me; and I learned from hitherto reliable Munich sources that, just after I had gone, she had *furchthar gebeult* (howled in a fearful manner). But that was all. I never heard from her again. I never saw her again.

Eventually she got married and went away from her native Bavaria to settle in Italy. I hope that the transformation of Germany into Hitleria and of the Corso of Rome into Unter den Mussolinden has not done for her—and that she is still alive and as well and happy as when she wore pigtails and had a moon-struck little American boy tagging after her.

The curtain falls.

It rises on Act II.

“PRITHEE, PRETTY MAIDEN . . .”

Again I ask readers to imagine me standing beside an imaginary chair, beside an imaginary table, in an imaginary tavern. Again I request them to hear my voice in imagination, as I proclaim to an imaginary company of still-hushed fellow-revelers:

“La deuxième, c’était—”

My mother and Jessie Sullivan had scrubbed my face. They had dusted me off. They had compelled me to dress myself in my best suit. They had given a farewell pat to my tie. They had silenced my last growls of panicky protest and headed me in the direction of the graduation exercises of my Cambridge Latin School class.

Standing unhappily on a high platform, before my relatives and the relatives of the other members of my class and the class itself, I had recited that dreadful Class Poem. There were no casualties. I was allowed to leave the hall. My schooldays were over. I had won my graduation diploma from Cambridge Latin. I had already taken preliminary entrance examinations for Harvard. I was ready for the Harvard finals.

But, with the suddenness characteristic of the Ybarras, it was decided in family council that the rest of the family should decamp from Cambridge, Mass. and travel southward for a long sojourn in my father’s native Venezuela. He himself was already there—had been for some time—preparing for the irruption of his wife and daughter and younger son (plus me, if I so desired) into South America.

At first I was very North American. “I will stay here in the North!” I declared. My Anglo-Saxon self hoisted the Stars and Stripes over my soul. When my Latin self started chanting the praises of Venezuela, I squelched him.

But the more I thought about living all alone in the cold

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North, while the rest of the family was basking in the warm South, the less northern I became. Eventually, in a sudden fit of Latinity, I petulantly dropped the idea of becoming a Harvard man, at least for the time being. My Latin self, sneaking up behind my North American self, gave the latter a smart kick. Joyously assuming the captaincy of my soul (temporarily, as it turned out; permanently, as he thought), he steered me away from Cambridge and over the Caribbean and into the port of La Guaira, Venezuela, and across the Avila Mountains to the fair city of Caracas.

There I was destined to stay more than two years. During that time my Anglo-Saxon self was exposed to such an onslaught of Latinity that it's a wonder he emerged with any fight at all left in him.

One of the principal reasons why there was such a clash during the first twenty years of my life between two of the Toms within me, Tom the North American and Tom the Latin American (Old Pa Rolling Stock didn't really get himself mobilized until later) was that both of them were *on the inside*.

Neither in the United States nor in Venezuela was I a foreigner peeking into the true life of the place. In neither was I like a visitor at a zoo. In neither was I like the Tom Ybarra who had lived in Munich between his twelfth and fourteenth birthdays. That individual had been merely a temporary sojourner from the outside world, who knew that his stay would be temporary; an outsider upon whose inner self nothing local could get a firm clutch, no matter how long or how hard it tried—not even Munich beer.

But in Boston and Caracas I *belonged*. In the former, my Massachusetts mother and her Massachusetts relatives, and my North American self mounting guard inside me, and teachers



T. R. Y. (extreme left) and American hikers in a Bavarian forest

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and schoolmates and natural affinity saw to that. In Caracas, the place of these was taken by my father. He was seconded by my vigilant Latin self, and by the soft lure of southern climate, and by the excitement of turbulent local politics, and by the sharpness and warmth of coloring shed upon my life at one of its most impressionable stages, and by the fact that I was in a small city where everybody knew everybody else, where uncles and aunts and cousins rounded every corner and hailed me in hearty greeting. All these things fought furiously to make me Latin beyond recall; under their persistent attacks Tom Ybarra the North American sometimes found himself with his last Massachusetts reserves in action and his back to the wall.

And there was something else—something very formidable—against which he also had to struggle. . . .

“La deuxième, c’était Atala!”

She lived on the block between the church of La Merced and the corner of Salas. Her house was on the right as you walked away from the church. Of course, its windows had big iron bars on them. But—

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage. . . .”

When Atala installed herself for the afternoon at her window, expectancy in her liquid black eyes, her swains (including me) knew naught of iron bars between us and our goddess.

It is five P. M. The afternoon sun of South America, which between the hours of two and four makes those who are wise stretch themselves out in lassitudinous siestas, is sinking toward its nocturnal rest. The evening breeze that makes Caracas one of the main branches on earth of paradise is already starting its

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whispering. The lovelorn males of Caracas are preparing to sally forth into the narrow streets of their little city, to pass again and again in front of the homes of the bright stars of their dreams, and ogle shamelessly as they pass.

It is time for me to hasten to the church of La Merced and there turn sharp left in the direction of the corner of Salas.

I arrive at La Merced. Yes, Atala is at her window. She is decked in her best. Her cheeks are powdered. Her lips are reddened. Her fan sways languidly. Unsmiling, she sits—and very straight. Dark, dignified, and demure, she waits for her admirers to pay her homage.

I move toward the corner of Salas. The rest of my universe, with engaging docility, drapes itself modestly around Atala, in sudden and touching subordination, to serve her as a background. That in turn serves as a hint to those stiff, cold iron bars, to melt away—at least, to the eyes of my mind. Which is all that matters. Around the corner of La Merced, affecting casualness in his mien and indifference in his glance, swings Tom Ybarra the Latin.

Carelessly, slowly, he walks—until he is opposite the home of Atala. Off comes his hat—in sweeping Castilian politeness. The queenly little head of Atala is inclined in frosty salute—strictly according to the etiquette governing afternoon conduct in Caracas love-making.

I reach the corner of Salas. I start back toward La Merced. Again I come opposite Atala's window.

This time I do not tip my hat. She does not incline her head. The field is left to our eyes. Here also etiquette rules. Into my glance I can put as much love as I can muster; but she must use restraint—not a difficult task for her, since she never had any particular use for me. Flame leaps from my eyes. One

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bright flash lightens hers. Then—eyelashes rush to the aid of etiquette. Her face dips behind her fan. I am back at the corner of La Merced.

And so it goes till dusk. Other swains, enslaved also to Atala, walk from La Merced to Salas, while I go in the opposite direction—from Salas to La Merced, while I cover the beat just relinquished by them. We are frigidly courteous to each other as we pass. Elaborately I ape ignorance of what brings those others to that particular block—with equal elaborateness they feign unconsciousness of why I am patrolling that particular beat.

Next day I patrol in a carriage. Some crony—Julio Escobar or Fermín Rodríguez—has gone halves with me on the hire, for the hours of afternoon ogling, of one of the natty little victorias of Caracas. We have rented a particularly natty one—with the rims of its wheels painted a gay yellow; with two mettlesome little horses between its brightly polished shafts; and, perched on the *pescante* above us, a coachman on whose dark blue suit there is not even the smallest stain, whose carefully cleaned and creased Panama shows no speck of dust (we are cheerfully paying extra for the services of a charioteer so blatantly next to godliness).

Between me and Julio (or Fermín) a solemn compact has been made. After we drive past Atala's house, we must next drive past his own particular Light-of-my-Life for the moment. Then we must pass in front of the windows of *my* Morning-Star-Number-Two. That entitles Fermín (or Julio) to cause our mettlesome nags to trot smartly past the house of *his* Assistant Aurora Borealis.

Then—back to Atala's. Then—another trot past the window of my companion's Moon-of-My-Delight. Then—a whirl past the houses of our respective Number Threes. And so on, in

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tireless amorousness. At each window we ogle devotedly—and our queens and princesses and ladies-in-waiting flash their eyes for a moment, only to veil them promptly behind cruel fans.

Finally, darkness gets ready to envelop Caracas. Sadly Julio (or Fermín) and I ask our coachman: "What's the damage?"

But the grandest method of courtship in Caracas—adopted by me occasionally in the Atala campaign—was to pay court on horseback.

In the company, sometimes, not of one crony but of several—at times, four or five—I would come trotting, on a carefully currycombed horse (owned or borrowed) up the block leading to La Merced. When we reached the corner on which the church of that name stood, the rider on the inside would turn his horse sharply to the left and then stand perfectly still. The rest of the column, with a precision worthy of trained cavalry, would pivot leftward around him. Then, when we were all abreast again in a straight line, the cavalcade would go prancing past Atala's with military magnificence. After this spirited conduct on our part, we would trot off to the block in front of the homes of the ladyloves of the rest of our troop—again in strict accordance with fair play.

We really were very grand when we did that corner-rounding evolution of ours. Sometimes Atala and the other ladies of the afternoon would be so impressed by it that they would give us a smile—trying hard, however, to divide it into as many parts as there were cavaliers—for fear that some female relative inside the house might suddenly go duenna and abruptly close the shutters.

After some months of bliss—it wasn't all characterized, I must interpolate, by such a degree of separation and restraint between me and Atala—the Ybarras succumbed again to that

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besetting trait of theirs: leaving town. The signal came for another journey to the United States. I was desolate. I greatly inconvenienced my mother by getting in the way of her frantic last-minute packing. She wouldn't have minded this so much if my face hadn't looked as if I had just heard the news of my imminent execution. When she rallied me, I wailed:

“It is *not* pleasant to be snubbed in *any* language!” (Atala, I recall, had refused to show any signs whatsoever of grief at my approaching elimination from the afternoon parade of her swains.)

On the trip between La Guaira and New York, I slowly came to. In fact, I recovered with such disgraceful rapidity that—when my young brother Alejandro, as we steamed toward the Statue of Liberty, said of a particularly pert and consequential little tugboat, puffing alongside, “Why, it looks like Atala!”—I smiled in languid appreciation.

The curtain falls.

Chapter V

"Love Is a Plaintive Song . . ."

"La troisième c'était—Mademoiselle!"

IT was at the turn of the century that the Ybarras—minus the general, who couldn't be pried loose—took the journey just mentioned from Venezuela, where they had been living a couple of years, to the United States. After our arrival in New York, my mother and sister and young brother settled down for a winter in Boston. But I, having reached the age of twenty, must needs look for a job. So, instead of becoming a Bostonian again, I was obliged to retrace my steps to New York and transform myself into a translator of Spanish in the foreign section of the Policy Department of the New York Life Insurance Company, then housed on lower Broadway, a short distance north of the City Hall.

New York at that time was the New York of cable cars on Broadway and hansom cabs on all streets; of the Brooklyn Bridge lording it over the East River in a glory undimmed as yet by the proximity of other bridges; of "L" trains pulled by pert little locomotives, which puffed and snorted above East Side and West Side and Pearl Street and Battery Park, with no inkling of the fatal competition from roaring subway trains that was to land them before so very long in the scrap heap.

It was the New York, for me, of early youth—of meals (60 cents, *with wine!*) with equally youthful damsels at Italian-

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Bohemian and French-Bohemian restaurants. At these places, stained tablecloths and unwashed waiters were powerless to tarnish the glamour which youth, unconsciously wistful, always has and always will lavish upon its fleeting adventures in Bohemia.

It was the New York of pre-Caruso grand opera at the Metropolitan Opera House. There—as I perched in one of the cheapest seats of the topmost gallery—the funeral march of *Götterdämmerung* revealed to me, with blinding suddenness and certitude, that the Italian gods of opera, who had reigned supreme until that moment as lords paramount of my musical taste, had been tumbled from shattered pedestals to exist thenceforth only as satellites of colder and sterner deities, enthroned amid blazing lightning and crashing thunder.

It was the New York of Ward McAllister's Four Hundred and of O. Henry's Four Million; of brown Vanderbilt palaces dotting Fifth Avenue all the way from Fortieth Street (with no Public Library opposite) to Fifty-Ninth Street (with no skyscraping Plaza Hotel across the way). It was the New York of Welsh rarebits; a New York whose gourmets swore by Delmonico's and Sherry's; whose citizens and citizenesses paraded on the Avenue, in Victorian finery, if they were of the elect, or boozed and brawled on the Bowery, if they were not. It was the New York of remote and alluring Florodora girls—ah, how alluring (and how damnably remote!) to a New York Life Insurance Company clerk with twenty years scored up on his last birthday and twelve dollars stuffed into his last pay envelope! Those goddesses of glamour, having tripped across the stage of the Casino to the strains of that double sextet which was sweeping New York audiences into ecstasy, would be gaily greeted, I reflected glumly, and solicitously ensconced

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in hansom cabs and affectionately escorted to a "hot bird and a cold bottle" by youths whose age was also twenty but whose weekly receipts were ten and fifty and one hundred times twelve dollars!

At the New York Life Insurance Company, when there were no Spanish letters to be translated, I used to fill in policies for Spaniards and Spanish-Americans craving to be insured. This laudable work, I fear, I did not take seriously enough. Instead of dreaming of eventually taking the place of President McCall, big boss of the New York Life—or at least of that august dignitary of mysterious functionings known as the Actuary—I used to write verses ridiculing the whole theory of insurance.

Having listened to *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan, I circulated among fellow-translators of foreign tongues in the Policy Department an outrageous parody of *La donna e mobile*, which purported to expose the true nature of insurance policies:

*La polizza e mobile
Come piuma al vento
Muta di premio
E d'amendamento—
Si l'assicurato vive,
Argento perduto;
Si l'assicurato muore—*

At this point my verses abruptly entered the realm of the unprintable. The thing made a hit with the rank and file of the foreign department of the New York Life. President McCall never saw it. Neither did the Actuary.

After six months of the insurance game, I decided that it was not for me, even when put into verse. I informed my parents that I wished to go to Harvard.

"All right," they said.

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So, with a shriek of glee, I filled out my last New York Life policy and made my last translation of a letter from a member of the Spanish race lusting to have his life insured.

That resolve of mine to enter Harvard marked the decisive victory of my North American self over my South American self. Never until then had I irrevocably cast the die as between the two. But—I fully realize now—there could be no settling down in Venezuela for a Tom Ybarra with a Harvard A.B. tacked onto his name.

At the age of eighteen, knowing that the rest of the family was headed for a long stay in Caracas, I had given up the idea (as I have already recorded) of going from the Cambridge Latin School to Harvard. I had elected instead to follow the rest of the Ybarras to South America. Between that decision and the one made by me at the New York Life Insurance Company more than two years of residence under the Venezuelan flag had intervened; and circumstances might easily have arisen which not only might have prevented my ever becoming a Harvard man but also settled once and for all the battle between my Latin and my North American selves in favor of the former.

But now there was no hope for Tom-of-the-South. He ran up the white flag and crawled into a secluded hideout inside my inner being, while Tom-of-the-North paraded joyously, convinced that, with his victory over that Latin Tom, he had established himself impregnably as the captain of my soul.

But he was counting his chickens before they were hatched. He was reckoning without that third self of mine—Tom the Gypsy, Tom the Little Friend of all the world's trains and boats—Old Pa Rolling Stock. There was much more serious fighting still ahead for Tom-of-the-North—already visualizing an eventual life of sedentary tranquillity in the United States.

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That decision of mine about Harvard was made in a certain June of my life. Harvard's doors would not reopen until September. It happened that the rest of the Ybarras—with the exception of the General, who persisted in clinging like a corpulent barnacle to his beloved Caracas—were planning to spend the summer in Europe. With another shriek of glee, I added myself to the party.

Across the Atlantic we went and up the Rhine, in sunshine and laughter. We eventually reached Baden-Baden, where doctors had ordained that my mother must be treated for a heart ailment.

We settled down at the Hotel de France. Everything was to us a grand joke. We respected nothing—or hardly anything—even the Grand Duke of Baden, who sometimes drove past us in his grand ducal equipage. The Teutons around us spoke reverently of this august personage whom they called der Grossherzog. We, however, called him the Great Hedgehog.

One day a tall, stiff German marched up to my mother, bowed, and said:

“Madame, I think you should know what you and your children are called in this hotel.”

“What are we called?”

“*La famille qui rit.*” With another bow, he marched out of our lives—while *la famille qui rit* went into a fit of collective laughter.

Another fit was occasioned when I, having gone to a barber shop, discovered that there was actually in existence in the imperial Reich of the Hohenzollerns a gadget for making moustaches stick up fiercely at each end, like those of the arrogant, strutting Kaiser Wilhelm the Second—or William Tooth, as

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we called him. In their desire to pay homage to Wilhelm many of his loyal subjects wanted their moustaches to resemble his—hence that gadget.

I promptly got the barber to clamp a *Schnurrbartbinde*, as the contraption was called, onto my diminutive moustache, while I was having my hair cut. Sure enough, when the barber removed the thing, the ends of my moustache, until that moment violet-like in their unassertiveness, were sticking straight up into the air with a fierceness which undoubtedly would have caused the Kaiser, had he seen them, to tack a *von* onto my name without an instant's hesitation—and free of charge. Knowing that my moustache would very soon resume its violet-like appearance, now that the gadget had been taken off, I dashed back at full speed to the Hotel de France to show myself to Leonor and Alejandro in my fleeting Hohenzollernishness.

They were suitably shocked. The reading room of the hotel rang with their howls of glee and shrill exclamations of protest. In fact, they made such a noise that a morose Teutonic fellow-guest slapped down his newspaper and, bristling with rage, strode over to us.

“This is a reading room!” he snarled. “Talk in this room is *verboten!*”

“No it isn't,” said the Ybarras.

“It is!” he roared. “That list of rules over the door says that you must not talk in here.”

“No it doesn't,” said the Ybarras.

The angry Teuton pounded across the room to a placard affixed to the door. There was nothing on that placard about not talking in the reading room. His disappointment almost

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blew him to bits before our eyes. With a snort of fury he stamped out of the room—his cheeks red, his eyes bloodshot, his hair standing on end.

The Ybarras were delighted.

"Let's call him Bismarck," one of them suggested. And Bismarck he was with us forever after.

All of which is a prelude to my first meeting with Mademoiselle.

Mademoiselle was a very pretty French girl. She was seventeen years old. She had shining brown eyes and forthright manners. She was staying with her parents at the Hotel Stephanie, which was too rich for our blood. But, thanks to my having become acquainted with Mademoiselle at the Baden-Baden Casino or some such place—and also thanks to the fact that an entire platoon of American youths, living in Stephanie splendor, had succumbed *en masse* to my young sister's devastating charms—Leonor and I were invited to play on the tennis courts of the Stephanie in the daytime and to dance in the evening over the polished floors of its sumptuous salons.

I became infatuated with Mademoiselle. Every tennis game, every dance, added to my infatuation. Soon I was no better than a mass of mush with the gift of locomotion—a gift which I used almost exclusively to locomote after that French siren.

Mademoiselle and I walked together. We rode on bicycles together. We went shopping together. In amorous exclusiveness we gulped Baden-Baden's famed waters. Together we promenaded at concerts staged by painfully earnest Teutonic musicians, suffering acutely from soul-cramps and nearsightedness, in the grounds of the erstwhile Casino—now reduced to the rank of a "Conversationshaus" and no longer the abode of gambling and assorted wickedness that it was when Thackeray

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transported to it most of the personnel of *The Newcomes*. And wherever I went with Mademoiselle, my ten-year-old brother Alejandro followed, consumed by burning interest in the Franco-American romance developing before his hypnotized gaze. One afternoon the graceless scamp even peeked over the bushes into Rumpelmayer's garden, where Mademoiselle and I were drinking tea and chewing cookies.

In vain I resorted to brutal, big-brother tactics.

"I'll spit on you until you're drowned!" I told Alejandro.

He protested in horror.

"I'll cut out your liver and use it for a watch charm!"

"Tommy!" he expostulated, terribly shocked. But shock after shock did not deter him from dogging my footsteps as I dogged those of Mademoiselle. Again and again he reported at the dinner table, to a highly appreciative mother and sister, the latest symptoms of my galloping mushiness.

After several weeks of ecstatic existence in the orbit of Mademoiselle, her father and mother—after the manner of terrestrial parents of celestial daughters—decided to return home (to France, in their case) and to take her with them. Eclipse settled, as far as I was concerned, on Baden-Baden.

My gloom was something awful. Nothing could be done about it. In vain the Ybarras wrestled with it. In vain my sprightly American grandmother—having arrived in town, in the course of a tour of Europe, with her daughter, my severe Aunt Dora—tried to laugh me out of it. Grandma, when in top form, was capable of getting a smile out of a gargoyle; but now she was powerless to cheer me up. I doubt whether even the faintest flicker of amusement was brought to my stricken features by a typical sally of hers which convulsed the rest of the family (except Aunt Dora).

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Grandma and Aunt Dora often quarreled about travel plans, menus, manners, morals, how the Ybarra trio of children should be brought up, etc.—and such quarrels often developed in grandma an unbudgeable obstinacy which would have aroused awe and respect in a mule. One day Aunt Dora suggested a plan involving Grandma. Grandma refused to be involved. Fireworks ensued—followed by the sudden irruption, into my mother's quarters at the Hotel de France, of Grandma, with the light of battle still in her eyes and these words on her lips:

“Nelly, I'm going to find out what Dora wants to do—and *then not do it!*”

My gloom was still black when I accompanied my mother and sister and brother to the Swiss mountain resort of Ragatz. There—a learned Baden-Baden heart specialist had informed my mother—she must drink another kind of water and undergo another kind of treatment.

At Ragatz I continued to mope. I looked with apathy on the beauties of nature. I remained cold to the charms of women. It was provable mathematically that Mrs. Ybarra, also her daughter, likewise her younger son, were in the mountains of Switzerland; but it was equally axiomatic that her elder son was in the mountains of the moon.

Finally I could endure such an existence no longer. I told my mother casually that I wanted to go to France.

“French art, you know,” I said to her. “French literature. French drama. The subtle historical glamour of Paris. Notre Dame. The Sainte-Chapelle. Now that I am in Europe I should not neglect all these beautiful things.”

“No, you shouldn't,” agreed my mother—with a twinkle in the corner of her eye. And she forthwith took from the family

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exchequer enough money to allow a twenty-year-old son to see Paris—enough, that is, for him to do so provided he kept his eyes shut.

At the Ragatz railway station, when she said goodbye to me, my mother's eye still twinkled. So did Leonor's—offensively. As for young Alejandro, he was almost bent double with bottled-up merriment.

"I'll cut out your liver—," I began wrathfully. But just then the train started.

Seated in a corner of one of its compartments, I read, for the eleventh time since that morning, a letter from Mademoiselle inviting me to visit her and her parents at Dunkerque—then merely a pleasant French sea-bathing resort, with no inkling of what was going to happen to it in 1940.

After I had been in Paris two or three days I received another letter. It informed me that Mademoiselle's father was also in Paris on a flying visit and would be charmed if I would join him and accompany him back to Dunkerque on the *de luxe* express which his high financial solvency enabled him to use with impunity.

That put me in a quandary. Already I had bought my ticket from Paris to Dunkerque on a much cheaper train. But pride forbade confessing that ignominious fact to the father of the star of my universe. When I saw him next day—of course, he was at the Ritz!—he greeted me with explosive cordiality.

"*Enchanté!*" he burred. "We go togezzzer to Dunkerque tomorrow on ze Etoile du Nord? Fifteen minutes before ze train depart we meet at ze Gare du Nord. *Au plaisir. Entendu? Au revoir.*"

Next morning I was at the Gare du Nord a full half hour before the time scheduled for the departure of the Dunkerque

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express *de luxe*. Five minutes passed. And five more. And another five. No sign of the father of Mademoiselle. Ten minutes elapsed. Only five more were left.

In despair I dashed to the ticket office and bought a ticket—*first class plus extra fare*—for the Etoile du Nord. That almost cleaned me out—Paris had helped herself generously to the limited funds provided in Ragatz by my mother. As I started to rush for the train, Mademoiselle's father appeared—without a trace of perturbation in his manner.

"*Enchanté!* Now I buy ze tickets. *What*—you bought yours already! *Méchant!*"

He got his ticket. When we reached the train, it was just about to start. We hurled ourselves onto the rear platform of the last car.

"*Magnifique!*" panted Papa. I fell, exhausted, into a seat. "Now we eat lunch. But—you *are my guest*. *Entendu?*" My nod of agreement almost broke my neck.

After several days of bliss with Mademoiselle, the time came when I must rejoin my family—now encamped not at all far away on the Belgian coast, near the beautiful old city of Bruges. Mademoiselle accompanied me to the station. So did her mother. So did a handsome young man from Alsace who had come to town the day before, upon whom Mademoiselle looked with favor and I with malevolence (she afterward married him).

This guard of honor to the Dunkerque *gare* was an honor all right—but it was also an embarrassment. You see, my finances were now in a deplorable condition. During my idyllic stay in Dunkerque I had recklessly and repeatedly bought tea and cookies and stronger fare for Mademoiselle. Now (a sur-

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reptitious reckoning disclosed) there remained in my purse only a little more than enough for a third-class fare to Bruges. But how could I allow the queen of my world—and the rest of the guard of honor—to guess the shameful truth? At the age of twenty a hideous death would have been preferable.

Mournfully I dragged myself to the station. In a few minutes more, I reflected, I would be exposed as a disgrace to *l'Amérique*, land of gilded millionaires. . . .

Then—with staggering suddenness—inspiration flashed into my brain.

I knew that the Bruges train stopped at a whole string of way stations. The first of these—let us call it Sainte-Marie—was only a couple of miles from Dunkerque. Detaching myself for a moment from my guard of honor, I poked my face through the ticket window of the Dunkerque station.

"One—*first-class—Sainte-Marie*," I whispered.

The ticket cost only a few cents. My slender funds remained almost untouched. I rejoined Mademoiselle and her mother and her Alsatian. Proudly I chatted with them, my hand carelessly on the door of a first-class compartment, my baggage grandly stacked inside. Proudly I showed my ticket to the conductor when he came bustling along the station platform—taking good care that my party should not read the *Sainte-Marie* inscribed on it.

"*En voiture!*"

Proudly I climbed into the train, to recline nonchalantly on the red plush cushions provided in French trains of that period only for first-class passengers. The conductor slammed the door shut. I blew kisses to Mademoiselle. The guard of honor bobbed and bowed. The engine tooted. The Dunkerque depot faded from sight. Five minutes elapsed.

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"*Sainte-Marie!*" bawled the conductor. "*Deux minutes d'arrêt!*"

I was out of my first-class compartment before the train had come to a full stop. I raced for the ticket office.

"One—Bruges—*third class!*" I gasped. I raced back to the train, tumbled all of a heap into the nearest third-class compartment. It had hard wooden seats instead of soft red plush ones; it was filled with rough peasants and grimy laborers. In my purse I still had, at the highest possible estimate, practically nothing. Yes, all was lost—*fors l'honneur*.

The curtain falls.

"La quatrième, c'était Little Worcestershire!"

A typical Wall Street office of the early twentieth century. Seated at a typical desk of the period is my long cousin from Boston, seldom out of temper and never out of funds. He is the manager of the New York branch of a Boston brokerage firm.

On a chair near by sits Tom Ybarra.

I am nervous. Feverishly I talk about the weather. Obviously I am ill at ease. My long kinsman, judging from the expression of his eyes, knows it. Finally, I can camouflage no longer. Desperately, in the manner of the melodramas of those days, I blurt out:

"Further subterfuge is useless! Lend me ten dollars! Little Worcestershire is in town!"

My cousin, throwing back his head, cackles with glee. He hands over a ten-dollar bill. I disappear for seventy-two hours.

At the end of that time I turn up again in his Wall Street office—in the deepest depths of dejection.

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"Am I right," he inquires, in his blandest New England manner, "in assuming that Little Worcestershire has left town?"

"You are," I reply. And, to the thousands of financial propositions submitted and discussed that day in downtown New York, I add this one:

"Lend me a dollar."

It was that Boston cousin of mine who named her Little Worcestershire. He said that she had that sort of effect on me.

She used to come to New York on visits and completely disrupt my normal round of life. Or, I would rush off to her native state and completely disrupt it all over again. I wrote verses to her. Only she ever saw them—I hope.

On one of her visits to New York, I recall, she and I took an extensive series of ferry trips. We were ferried from Manhattan to Brooklyn, from Brooklyn to Jersey, from Jersey back to Manhattan—even Staten Island may have figured in those travels. In after years she used to tease me about my partiality for ferries, and I used to parry her thrusts without hinting at the real meaning of that partiality, which was this: Taxicabs run into money; ferries do not.

(Little Worcestershire later married one who could afford taxicabs and ferries all rolled into one, with transatlantic liners on the side.)

Once she and I met in Paris. After the meeting I sighed. I looked raptly at walls. I was absentminded, strangely silent. Next morning at breakfast I received a bunch of red roses and a note signed with Little Worcestershire's name.

"Let's lunch together at La Cigogne tomorrow at one," it said.

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I looked up suddenly. Penny looked down.

I fixed my eyes on her. She glanced out of the corner of one of hers. It was dancing.

"Penny!" I exclaimed, in an outraged voice, "Was it you who sent me that note and those . . . ?"

"Certainly not!" she protested.

"You're a confounded little liar!"

"I'm not!"

"Why did you do it?"

"Because," she chuckled—and now I could see both of her eyes and both of them were doing a devil-dance—"they have such excellent *pâté-de-foie-gras* at La Cigogne."

The man whom Little Worcestershire married is a manufacturer. Once she informed me: "He makes grinding wheels—you know, of course, what they are for?"

I did not. I have never been able to learn anything whatsoever about any piece of machinery—unless it has the merciful simplicity of a shoehorn. But I answered:

"Oh yes, naturally—very fine things indeed"—though, for all I knew, the objects produced by Little Worcestershire's spouse might have been rotary contraptions for grinding the faces of the poor. Every once in a while, when I think of her, I get a fleeting picture of her affable husband planing off the features of necessitous persons with an awesome revolving wheel, patent applied for. I know he does no such thing—nevertheless, that's how I see him in dreams.

The curtain falls.

In the last act of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, words by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, music by Jacques Offenbach, the curtain rises on a stage set exactly as it was in Act I.

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Hoffmann is shown still standing as he was at the fall of the first curtain. He is finishing the narrative of his most important love affairs. Seated exactly as they were when the curtain fell on Act I are his boon companions. They are still leaning forward, still ignoring the glasses of wine before them—raptly attentive.

Suddenly Hoffmann tosses his head. He snaps his fingers. With reckless abandon, he lifts his glass high over his head.

“Away with women!” he shouts. “They bring us nothing but trouble! Down with the lot of them! Back to wine—and joy!”

He drains his glass. With loud yells, his companions do likewise. The last curtain falls on a boisterous bacchanal.

That final act of Offenbach’s librettists has always (I repeat) commanded my enthusiastic admiration. And, as I said a few pages back, I set out here to imitate their method.

But—I cannot finish this chapter as they finished their libretto.

After Lorle, after Mademoiselle, after Little Worcestershire, I *did* think for a long time that I would try to be a misogynist. I *did* give rein to somber outbursts of cynicism. I *did* imply, in cynical conversation, my immunity to the wiles (how transparent, forsooth!) by which marauding members of the female sex had ensnared some of my cronies.

But—abruptly—the fortifications which had accumulated, through the years, around my inner citadel, collapsed—like the walls of a twentieth-century Jericho at the trumpet blast of a twentieth-century Joshua.

But, in my case, it wasn’t Joshua. It was Penny.

Chapter VI

"And Thus to Empyrean Height . . ."

SOME Harvard men are so exclusive that they give the cut direct to their reflections in a mirror. But I never cultivated such specimens—nor they me. With hand upraised I can say that they never figured to any appreciable extent in my Harvard career. My close friends there were mostly insouciant, run-of-the-mill youths, who took neither themselves nor anybody else nor anything else seriously—at least, nor for long.

We cheered insanely at football and baseball games. We affected floppy suits. We strutted in gaudy shirts. We wore ties that would have aroused enthusiasm in Harlem. We were convinced, I must admit, of an inherent superiority owing to the fact that we were component ingredients of that mystical dish, Harvard—yet, by and large, we were probably a pretty attractive lot, no better nor worse than dozens of corresponding aggregations of youth in dozens of other colleges of our epoch.

Most of us considered studying too hard in Cambridge a misdemeanor and dissipating too little in Boston a crime. With reprehensible frequency we used to flock across the Charles River to savor the far from puritanical joys hidden behind the puritanical façade of Boston. Boozing and wenching, in my college days, were much admired. And they were not always cultivated solely on the merits which, through the centuries, have kept them from becoming dated. Many of us, God knows, thought them ultra-meritorious; but there were some who in-

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vestigated them in a spirit of this-sort-of-thing-must-be-done-I-suppose. This attitude, in the case of naturally bun-shy and sexually hesitant members of the student body, took on at times the heroic attributes of self-sacrifice.

Not often, though. In our ranks, as we roistered and sang and watched the dawn rise over Boston's prim streets, we counted a liberal supply of boozers of awesome capacity and wenchers of formidable lustiness, who needed no prodding from a stern sense of duty on their pilgrimages to the vineyards of Dionysos or the boudoirs of Aphrodite.

From the moment of my enrollment as a Harvard freshman, I made up my mind to "make" the Harvard Lampoon. In fact, I must confess, as I look back on my undergraduate days, that I gave far too much attention to that repository of Harvard humor and far too little to the treasures of wisdom hidden in the depths of the Harvard courses—treasures accessible, unfortunately, only to industrious diggers. Mine, indeed, was a case of—Had I but served my mind with half the zeal with which I served my sense of humor. But the harm's done. It's beyond remedying. And I got an immense amount of enjoyment out of my wholehearted pursuit of election to the Harvard Lampoon.

I wrote verses for it. I wrote prose articles for it. I wrote jokes for it. I wrote captions for caption-less drawings. Anything and everything I did, in short, of a kind calculated to bring me favor from the editors. Those editors, in my eyes, were Olympian beings who trod the heights and communed with the gods and fed on honeydew. Never, I am sure, shall I feel satisfaction more substantial than when Paul Bartlett of the senior class, the Lampoon's editor-in-chief, spoke to me affably on Holyoke Street about grown-up acquaintances we

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had in common in the outer, un-Harvard world surrounding us—or than when Henry Eliot, also a senior Lampoon editor, conducted himself, when our paths crossed on Harvard Square, with a similarly democratic contempt for the caste system.

My single-minded stalking of election to the Lampoon soon bore delicious fruit. I was made a member of its editorial board at the end of my freshman year—the only member of my class to be so honored.

After initiation, I added to my already varied repertoire as a contributor to the Lampoon the writing of editorials and of By-the-Ways. The latter—which got their name from the fact that they always appeared under the caption By-the-Way—were immutable features of every issue of the paper. Every one of them—Harvard tradition inexorably demanded—must be a collection of outrageous puns. I produced—may the gods forgive me!—my full share of By-the-Ways. If, as in all other forms of Harvard light literature of that period, they could be made to include insulting remarks about Yale, so much the better. With this objective in view, I wrote in one of them:

“Why is old port the best port?”

“Because port means haven and the worst haven is New Haven.”

Henry Eliot, incidentally, that affable and democratic Olympian, was famous as one of the ablest perpetrators of By-the-Ways of his epoch. Once, I remember, just after the installation of a swimming pool in one of the swell student dormitories on Harvard’s Gold Coast, he inserted this into one of his productions:

“Have you seen the new tank in Westmorly?”

“No—who is he?”

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Another notorious writer of By-the-Ways was a member of the Lampoon staff who, after my initiation, introduced himself to me, in the paper's sanctum, thus: “My name's Bishop. But don't let that bother you. In this place I'm called everything from Beer-Shop to Bitch-pup.”

Sometimes the Lampoon made excursions into ribaldry, more or less veiled, which caused hints of suppression by the faculty if the editors did not mend their ways. Once, when rumors of drastic impending faculty action were particularly rife, the scamps who ran the Lampoon produced a blank front cover with the word *SUPPRESSED* in glaring red letters across the space usually occupied by the picture chosen for the place of honor.

Harvard and Boston wondered what the dreadful suppressed product could possibly have been—and the members of the Lampoon's editorial board were credited with all sorts of Rabelaisian and worse trends of thought. And while Harvard and Boston wondered and tried to guess what had been on that front cover before the faculty stepped in, the editors of the paper rolled around in their sanctum on Holyoke Street in fits of laughter because nothing on that front cover had ever been suppressed by anybody for the simple reason that there had never been anything there to suppress.

It was all very childish, I suppose. It was all unworthy, doubtless, of young men drinking in culture and education at one of the most respectable intellectual dramshops in the world. But we got a lot of fun out of it. And I, for one, wish it were as easy nowadays to get even a small percentage of that fun out of anything at all in this sorry universe which fate has wished on us!

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In addition to trying to "make" the Lampoon, I also tried to get on the staff of the Harvard Advocate. This was a highly literary undergraduate product, taken with portentous seriousness by the youths who edited it—a seriousness which they endeavored manfully to instill into contributors who were not on the editorial board.

One day, a group of these contributors, including myself, were solemnly summoned by the editor-in-chief, Richard Washburn Child, to the paper's sanctum, at that time on the upper floor of the Harvard Union Building. In crisp and severe words he sought to teach us the proper way to write if we wished to have our writings appear in the Advocate's columns. He summed up his message from Parnassus as follows: "Above all, avoid he-and-she stories, New England dialect and sonnets."

I promptly sat down at a desk in the writing room on the ground floor of the Union and dashed off a sonnet in New England dialect on a he-and-she topic—and I prefaced it with Dick Child's solemn summing-up of his advice to Advocate contributors. Ed Little, one of the editors, chanced to pass through the writing room. I showed him my poem. He gave me a look—then he stuffed the thing into his pocket and climbed the stairs to the Advocate offices. LINES TO A GAL I SEEN DAOWN TEW BOSTON—that was the title of my production—appeared in the next issue of the Advocate—caption and all.

One of the good things about Harvard as I recall it was the way we students used to laugh at ourselves. Of course, there were times when we looked on our Alma Mater and on ourselves with delicious solemnity, after the manner of youth everywhere. But there were other times, and plenty of them,

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when we could draw off to one side and smile at the unsmiling antics with which we filled our hours of solemnity.

To illustrate this: just before the football team was due to leave Cambridge to play an important game somewhere else, the most prominent members of the student body—the president of the senior class, the captains of the baseball and track teams, and such-like—used to have published in the *Crimson*, the Harvard daily paper, the following stern appeal:

"All students are urged to meet today at noon in Harvard Square to cheer the Harvard team on its departure for the game with Yale.

A. Cabot

J. Lowell.

F. Coolidge."

That sort of thing always tickled me, even in the days when complete realization of the awful importance of football ran neck and neck with my chuckles. So once I perpetrated and circulated this:

"All angels are urged to meet today at noon in Throne Square in order to cheer the Heaven team on its departure for the game with Hell.

G. Almighty.

J. Christ.

H. Ghost."

When I was at Harvard, the automobile was in its infancy. Hardly a student possessed one except "sports" of the sportiest kind. These individuals dressed themselves up in weird motor-ing costumes and went careering around in cars painted bright yellow or glaring green or flaming red—a state of affairs which moved Alec Kendall to remark, apropos of a Harvard motorist who had just gone whizzing and honking past, looking like a *pousse-café* driving a rainbow: "Every damned fool in college

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doesn't own a car; but every student who owns a car is a damned fool."

At that time the magazine *Life* in New York was running a vitriolic anti-automobile campaign. So ferocious was the animosity of *Life's* editors toward motoring and motorists that they even went to the length of offering \$25 for the best versified denunciation of the newfangled horror by an undergraduate of an American university.

This reckless generosity prompted me to brush up some old verses, contributed by me a couple of years before to *The Bird of Paradise*, and submit them to the judges of *Life's* Soak-the-Automobile contest.

Some days later I opened an envelope in my morning's mail. Out of it dropped a check for \$25, together with a note from the editors of *Life* informing me that I had won the prize offered by them and that my prize-winning verses would be published in a forthcoming issue of their weekly.

Here was an event, I instantly decided, demanding celebration of a lavish and enthusiastic character. I resolved to give a dinner. This function (described in the printed invitations sent around by me as a Select and Impressive Feed) was attended by about a dozen of my closest friends at *Mieusset's* French restaurant, in Boston's South End, a favorite resort of Harvard's would-be Bohemians.

After I had footed the bill for the Feed, which included cocktails and French wine, I was minus all the profits from my venture into anti-automobile poetry. But the circumstances, I felt, fully justified pennilessness. I have forgotten all of my rhymed attack on the automobile except the opening lines:

"THUS TO EMPYREAN HEIGHT . . ."

A glimpse of an age yet to come
From the furnace of deepest hell shot,
With a buzz and a whirr and a hum
And a stinking old gasoline pot. . . .

Looking over the above, I have an uncomfortable feeling that it dates me as a contemporary (practically) of Andrew Jackson and an eyewitness (almost) of the War of 1812.

Marks at Harvard ran from A to E. A was excellent, B good, C fair, D bad, E awful—so awful in fact that it meant failure for a student in any course in which he got it. D also represented trouble if sprinkled too liberally among a student's marks—but one lone D was not fatal.

I achieved the distinction in my Harvard years of running the whole gamut of passing marks from A to D—to D minus, in fact. This last was so close to E as to be almost indistinguishable from that repulsive creature.

Since the Harvard of my day gave entering students credit for any kind of knowledge acquired by them in their pre-Harvard existence, no matter how, when, or where they had come by it, I got one A by anticipating Spanish. All I had to do for that credit was to translate a lot of Spanish at sight—which, with my Spanish background, made falling off a log in comparison an operation requiring a considerable application of skill and experience.

I also got an A by anticipating elementary French. This was far from being so easy for me as my achievement in anticipating Spanish, but it also presented no real difficulties. After all, French and Spanish are similar; and a variegated assortment of French nouns, verbs, and adjectives, etc. had hovered around

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my early youth in Venezuela, Germany, and the United States. I likewise got an A by anticipating advanced German—that was the least to be expected from my Munich past. So, when I became a Harvard freshman, I had three full-fledged A's to my credit, achieved at a minimum cost in time and trouble.

In philosophy, or rather the history of philosophy, I received my only B for a Harvard course. I have never understood exactly why I was considered deserving of such a praiseworthy mark, since my interest in the world's famous philosophers, though undoubtedly existent, was seldom followed up by really persevering attempts to find out the reasons for their fame. (One of the members of the Harvard faculty, by the way, who tried to drill philosophy into my skull was George Santayana.) The more I think about that B of mine, the more I wonder at it—could it have been a misprint?

One example of just how much I got to know about the history of philosophy through the ages will suffice to show that my wonder was justified.

The examination paper in Phil. 1B—as the course taken by me was known in Harvard jargon—included a printed request from the examining professor to state the difference between the philosophical doctrines of Fichte and those of Schopenhauer. Unfortunately, lack of application during the months preceding the date of the examination had incapacitated me from stating convincingly the difference between the philosophical doctrines of Fichte and a bunch of asparagus. Nevertheless, I decided valiantly that I would not confess my ignorance by failing to meet the professor's request.

Seated on one of the hard benches in the examination room, in one of the buildings enclosing the Harvard Yard (never say *Harvard Campus* to a Harvard man!), I thought to myself, as

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I touched the point of my pencil to my tongue:

"It is obvious that the examiner would not have asked me to state the difference between Fichte and Schopenhauer unless there were striking dissimilarities between them. Well, Schopenhauer was a pessimist (somehow I had learned that much). Ergo—here I made a magnificent leap in the dark—Fichte was *not* a pessimist. Or, anyhow, he was not such a storage warehouse for concentrated gloom as Schopenhauer was."

Having come to this decision on that point, I unlimbered my pencil and proceeded to write a long and cautious disquisition on how Fichte, though no Pollyanna of rancid optimism, was practically a sunbeam net compared to Arthur-with-the-Stomachache-in-his-Soul. Fichte was that sort of philosopher, I went on, because of a basic belief in goodness and decency and all that sort of thing, which kept him from courting (like Schopenhauer) sudden death instead of pretty ladies. That isn't exactly what I wrote, but it was something like that. And I got a B in the examination!

The rest of my answers, it behooves me to make clear, were nowhere nearly so heavily grounded on sheer guesswork as that shot of mine at Fichte-in-relation-to-Schopenhauer. As a matter of fact, I had done a good deal of work in frantic eleventh-hour efforts to pass the examination. As the date for the examination drew near, these efforts had culminated in a series of all-night sessions of study, in the company of other panic-stricken degree-hunters—punctuated by trips to a joint in Harvard Square which never closed. There we drank black coffee copiously, in the naïve hope that it would help us to circumvent malevolent college deities bent on giving us an E.

At these nocturnal sessions, held in rotation in the rooms of one or the other of us until the dawn covered our haggard

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features with pale light, each participant was called upon to read, from the notes which he had jotted down during the course, whatever he considered the choicest plums of his philosophical knowledge. I have forgotten now what I claimed to know best. But I do remember that Alec Kendall averred one night that he could tell us all we needed to know about Immanuel Kant and The Absolute.

"Go ahead," we urged him, deeply awed.

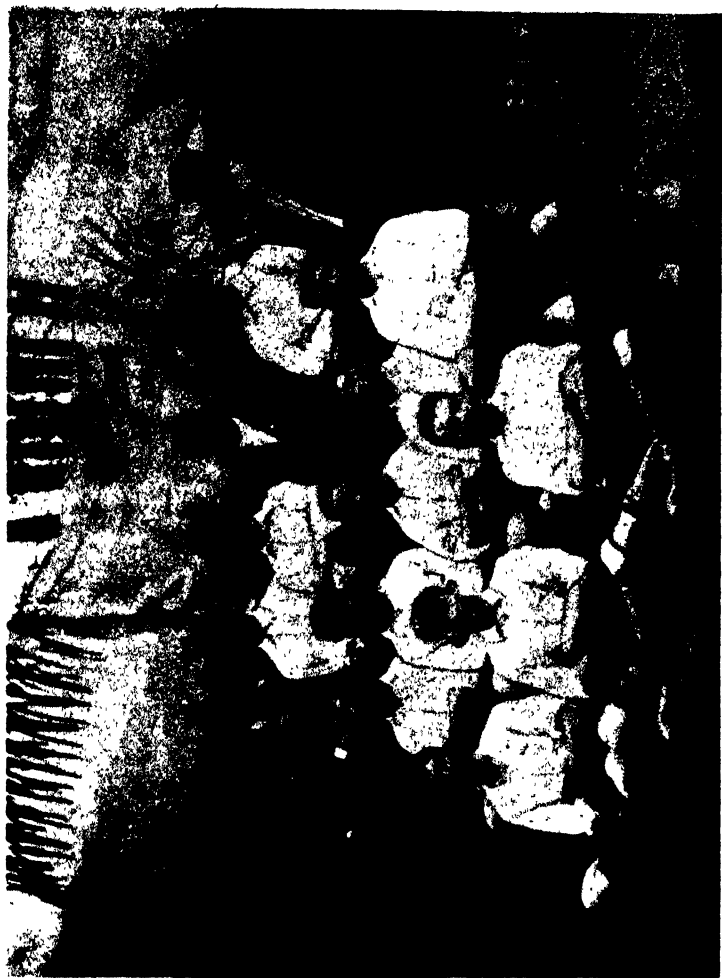
"Well," said Alec, solemnly clearing his throat, "Kant thought everything a damned mess except The Absolute and—er—you see—ahem—well, he thought The Absolute a damned mess too!"

My three A's and my lone B were accompanied by a regular cluster of C's. Though C was a passing mark by a safe margin, it was sniffed at by Harvard "grinds," proudly strutting across the Yard on their road toward Phi Beta Kappa, as a mark that simply stank of scholastic mediocrity. But I didn't care. C was solid merit, I reasoned—not caviar or champagne in the menu of education, but certainly corned beef and cabbage.

I got C in History 1. I got C in History 19. I got C in Government 1 (from A. Lawrence Lowell, by the way, later to become president of Harvard, in succession to the august Charles William Eliot). I got C in English A. I got C in English 12.

Much of what I selected for study at Harvard was imposed upon me by a sense of duty. Economics, for example—and, to a certain extent, philosophy. For history I had a decided personal leaning; but, even in the choice of my history courses, there was likewise a touch of now-really-I-ought-to-take-this. French and German got on my list principally because foreign languages have always appealed to me and have always seemed

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Caracas soccer team at the turn of the century

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easy. And I heeded willingly the beckoning of English, elementary and advanced.

But one course and one course only, among the total of seventeen and a half courses needed in my day for a Harvard degree, I chose simply and solely because I wanted it. From that one alone, I felt, I would derive the fullest quota (given my mental equipment) of strictly personal enjoyment, more enjoyment indeed than out of all the others rolled together. The Harvard course selected by me with such joyous anticipation was Music 1. And it was—alas!—in that course that I got the lowest of all my marks, a mark that missed abject failure by the narrowest of margins—*D minus!*

Through the sessions of Music 1, I sat with no joy whatsoever at any point from the beginning of one of my college years to its end. The trouble was that the course dealt with the mathematics of music—a detail I had completely failed to discover before I had enrolled in it. To me, Music 1 was utterly devoid of charm and beauty. I had expected melody and harmony, with the instructor playing delicious tidbits from the classics most of the time and explaining each in the briefest of explanations and then sitting down at a piano to play the next. What I got was (or so it seemed to me) a repellent hash of algebra and geometry extracted by a soulless mathematical expert from the bowels of differential calculus.

After the marks for the course had been apportioned, I met the professor who taught Music 1 at a college tea.

"I hated to give you that D minus," he told me, sipping from his teacup. "But—you deserved it—you *most certainly deserved it!*"

The worst of it was that I loved music above all other forms of art—and I still do. But I hated the mathematical fungi with

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which, I found, that form of art was all cluttered up. To try to enjoy music by taking Music 1, I decided one day when my loathing for the fungi was particularly virulent, was like seeking to appreciate feminine beauty by training an X-ray apparatus on a beautiful lady's liver and lungs and gizzard.*

• Have ladies gizzards?

Chapter VII

"In Search of Wisdom's Pure Delight . . ."

WHILE I was at Harvard I preferred small to large classes. Courses like History 1, conducted by Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge—a Boston aristocrat of immense learning, who fascinated the great body of Harvard men (they called him "Archy") because he was afflicted with a painful stammer—and Government 1 (under the aegis of A. Lawrence Lowell) came under the head, to me, of mass education. Henry Ford, had he ever seen a History 1 or Government 1 class, would have thrilled at the thought that the same methods could be applied to education as to flivvers.

Each of those courses was taken by hundreds of students. They met in Sanders Theater—a big auditorium forming part of Harvard's Memorial Hall—and afforded hardly any opportunity at all for individual relationship between teacher and taught.

In the same category of size was also Economics 1. This course I did not like. The dislike which I instantly developed for it in my college days has caused me to find sadistic satisfaction at the thought of how grievously those orthodox economic theories—sacred to Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill—drilled into me at Harvard, have been shot to pieces by the glaringly unorthodox line of development taken in the era since my graduation by this perverse world of ours. What would the instructor who tried to teach me economics have thought of Hjalmar Schacht and the barter system? He

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wouldn't have thought of it at all!—he would have died instantly at the bare mention of it! So strong was my aversion for economics that once, in a burlesque of a typical Harvard examination paper which I contributed to the Harvard Lampoon, my first question ran as follows:

1. (a) Do you like Economics 1?
- (b) Why not?

Philosophy 1B was also taken by quite a crowd of students. But never, even when fully attended, did it take on the aspect of a mass meeting as much as History 1 or Government 1. Other Harvard classes of my day dwindled down through various gradations of size until they become select little gatherings, more like clubs than courses, composed of a score or two of students. That was the kind I liked best.

History 19 was one of these. It, too, was presided over by Archy Coolidge—who, it seemed to me, enjoyed as much as I did its exclusiveness as compared with multitudinous History 1. Indeed, Archy used to impress upon us in History 19 how different we were from the dumb, driven freshman herd being run through the sausage-mill of History 1. For instance, at one History 19 session, Archy, who not only stammered but did other acrobatics with his speech, came in a bit late. He caught us all skylarking—throwing pellets of paper about, pulling hair, kicking shins, etc. He was disgusted.

"I am surprised," he informed us icily, "at such fweshman twicks!" That was the way Archy talked. In the pitiless fashion of youth, we all used to imitate him; and the Harvard Lampoon used to print dissertations, by an unnamed professor of history, on "weckless wobber bawons" and the "wiffwaff of Pawis."

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History 19, when I took it, had about twenty-five students, including Hendrik Willem Van Loon. It dealt largely with the rise of the Turkish Empire. Despite his handicaps, Archy made it a drama filled with thrill and color. He was noted throughout the length and breadth of Harvard for the diabolical trickiness of his examination papers. Therefore, when the time for the midyear or final exams drew near, his students—like those in Phil. 1B—used to fall into a panic and resort to all-night sessions (liberally irrigated with strong coffee) in the hope of averting the wrath of the gods of history as expressed by their resident agent in eastern Massachusetts, Archibald Cary Coolidge.

At one of these sessions, I recall, Hendrik Willem Van Loon, already in those days of his early youth equipped with a considerable percentage of that humor which (to my way of thinking) has few peers in fluidity, was chuckling because some of the kings of early Serbia were originally swineherds.

“*Swineherds*,” gurgled Hendrik—investing the word with such pictorial porcine reality that the rest of us could almost hear the grunting of Serbian pigs and the swooshing of Serbian pigs’ feet in fourteenth-century Serbian mud puddles. Hendrik Willem was forthwith called upon by his companions-in-terror-of-Archy to give a résumé of his notes on Serb monarchs. With an expression of portentous gravity he read aloud to us something like this:

“And then Black George-o-vitch—SWINEHERD!—son of Red Mike-o-vitch—SWINEHERD!—defeated Stepan Milano-vitch and Milan Stepanovitch—SWINEHERDS—at the great battle of Swincherd-o-vitch.”

The biggest of the many laughs given me by Hendrik Willem Van Loon in our long acquaintanceship was caused by his

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Thessalonian story. I have suspected him always of inventing it—if he didn't, the brain of the man who did was the Siamese twin of Hendrik's. Here is the story:

Two expert boozers were leaning against a bar, weaving back and forth in blissful drunkenness. Said one to the other:

"Lishn. Bet you can't guess who wrote th'epistle to the Thessalonians. Give up? Well—hic—I'll tell you. *I wrote it.*"

"Thasso? Well, lishn. Do you—hic—'xpect getnanswer to your—hic—'pistle to the Thessalonians?"

"Maybe."

"Well, lishn. If you getnanswer to your epistle to the—hic—Thessalonians, will you do me favor?"

"Maybe. What favor—hic—you wan' me do you?"

"Lishn. If you getnanswer to your—hic—letter—hic—to the Thessalonians, *save me the stamp.*"

Archy Coolidge sketched for us the colorful careers of various Turkish, Serbian, Bulgarian, and other monarchs, all of whom have one characteristic in common: I have never given a thought to any of them since. I tried to help my companions in History 19 to think about one of them, King Krum of Bulgaria—at least until after Archy had fired his examination paper at us—by chanting surreptitiously when he wasn't listening:

Old King Krum
Was a merry old bum—

That, alas, is all I remember about King Krum. I don't recall even the other lines of my poem about him—assuming that it had any more.

In my study of English at Harvard my pet course was English 12. It was imparted by Professor LeBaron Russell Briggs, Harvard's renowned dean, afterwards President of Radcliffe

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College—a great celebrity in the scholastic world of that day. Dean Briggs was a man of extraordinary erudition and charm, of ever-questing versatility and never-quenched humanity, who thought like a prophet, talked like an angel and looked like a farm hand. He hailed from Plymouth, Mass.—and never was he happier than when he could exchange long months in Cambridge for short vacations in the town of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Once a French savant who was visiting the United States wanted above all else to meet LeBaron Briggs. So great was his eagerness that he was taken by a member of the Harvard faculty to Plymouth, where the object of his veneration happened to be sojourning. While the Frenchman and his host were driving along a road toward the home of the famous dean of Harvard, the American pointed to a bumpkin sprawling uncouthly on the top of a farm wagon loaded with hay—a bumpkin wearing bedraggled garments covered with dirt, with grimy hands and dusty shoes and hayseed in his hair.

“See that man?” asked the American.

“*Mais oui.*”

“That’s Dean Briggs.”

“*Mais, c’est impossible, mon cher!*”

A few minutes later LeBaron Briggs had clambered down from the load of hay, and he and the French savant were immersed in discussion of the world’s literature.

Incidentally, Dean Briggs was a distant cousin of mine, a fact which I proclaimed frequently and proudly, appositely or dragged-in-by-the-hair, in and out of season.

Under his tutelage in English 12 I failed to distinguish myself. In the days when I was taking that course I was in the grip of intense admiration for some writer or other whose work was filled with delicate nuance and gossamer lightness of touch

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—a writer who never stressed a point or dotted an “i.” So I wrote a piece for English 12 in slavish imitation of that writer’s style. I placed it on Dean Briggs’s desk.

In a few days he returned it to me with the following scrawled in pencil across the top of my first page:

“This is managed so suggestively that it narrowly escapes suggesting nothing at all.”

On another occasion, I remember, before plunging into teaching us English literary lore, Professor Briggs chuckled to his students about the verses of a bombastic new football song just produced by a couple of Harvard students in anticipation of the great game with Yale, which was to be played at the end of the week. Gleefully, LeBaron Briggs quoted these words from the song:

“We sing hooray, hooray, hooray,
There’s never an Eli can teach us to play—

“In New Haven,” he remarked, with a twinkle, “the meaning of that second line might be misconstrued.”

Two eyes alive with kindliness—an unkempt thatch—the deeply furrowed features of a farmer, inured to rain and sun and wind and sleet—unpressed clothes—awkward gait—wisdom in his glance—wit on his lips—mud on his boots—that was LeBaron Briggs.

With the celebrated Charles William Eliot, president of Harvard, I had little personal contact—an experience shared with me by practically the entire student body.

President Eliot was Olympian. Aloofness only faintly describes his attitude toward us. He seemed to move on a planet so far removed from the one on which we groveled as to make him feel that even a nod was too high an honor for us. I am not

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criticizing—I am merely stating. Charles William Eliot was that sort of a man. I am the first to acknowledge that, in view of the incorrigible lightness of mind of most students, his attitude was justifiable. It was certainly frigid. Jokes about Prexy Eliot's frigidity were as common around Harvard Square in my college years as were those dealing with Archy Coolidge's stutter. The Harvard Glee Club of that period, I recall, which used to give concerts in Boston and adjacent territory, often included in its program the following chant, sung to a gay little tune:

"Prexy once walked through the Square,
The students were all gathered there—
He bowed to each one
And, when he was done,
The dead were piled high in the air!"

Harvard celebrities in my day already included Copey. That was—and is—the irreverent nickname given by Harvard men to Professor Charles T. Copeland, then and now an object of reverence in Harvard's private world. During my undergraduate career, Copey—wearing a bright halo of university and extra-university renown—used to give little informal parties of an evening at his rooms in Stoughton, that venerable ornament of the Harvard Yard. He invited me to attend one of these parties. The wording of his invitation was an excellent example of Copeyism:

"Mr. Ybarra," he growled, when our paths crossed in the Yard, "there will be a gathering in my rooms at 9 o'clock to-night. Mr. Popinski Popoutovitch (or some name like that), the well-known Macedonian patriot, will be the guest of honor. There will be nothing to eat. There will be nothing to drink. If you care to come, you are welcome."

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I said I'd be present—but I wasn't. That was my first black mark in Copey's books.

Some time after I had graduated from Harvard, Copey came to New York, where I was domiciled, to give one of those remarkable readings of poetry which were among the principal reasons for his fame. I did not show up. A few days later Copey and I encountered each other. In that succession of deep grunts which Harvard men of several generations have assiduously parodied, with varying degrees of failure, Copey said:

"I did not see you, Mr. Ybarra, at my reading."

"No, I couldn't get there," I stammered uneasily. "You see, some time before I knew you were going to give the reading, I had arranged to . . ."

Copey abruptly cut my stammerings short. Shaking a finger at me, in stern disapproval, he grunted:

"I fear you are a man of pleasure, Mr. Ybarra, a man of pleasure!"

After my graduation, when I was on the New York Times, a son of Carr V. Van Anda, the Times' Managing Editor, was going through Harvard. Recollecting that I had been there a few years before, Mr. Van Anda one day summoned me into his sanctum in order to learn something about Harvard technique around examination time.

"Did you take—?" he asked me, naming one of the courses given at the Alma Mater of his son and myself.

"Yes!"

"Did you pass in it?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"By the black-coffee route."

"By the—WHAT?"

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"The black-coffee route."

"What's that?"

I explained about those steaming cups of coffee in that all-night dump on Harvard Square, where, with other bleary-eyed triflers, I used to watch the dawn filter through the windows and listen to Hendrik Willem Van Loon discourse about royal Serb swineherds.

Mr. Van Anda listened with a cold look on his face. He seemed to be saying to himself: "My son and you, I see, live on entirely different planes of existence. Please go away." I went away.

Incidentally, some years after that, Mr. Van Anda became immensely interested in the exhumation of King Tut-an-Khamen of Egypt from his tomb on the Nile—indeed, his interest was so immense that lore about Tut filled many columns of the Times and almost caused the Times staff to believe that our managing editor—and not Lord Carnarvon or Howard Carter—was the prime actor in the plot to ignore the "Do not disturb!" sign which had been hung for thousands of years on the front door of the tomb of Tut. This moved me to circulate around the Times office the following:

Old King Tut
Was a merry old mutt
And a merry old mutt was he,
He jumped down his tomb
And he pulled the door shut
And he waited for C. V. V.—

an illuminating example, my biographer will doubtless decide, of the period in my literary development which also produced Old King Krum.

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Kipling knew. And he found the right words for his knowledge when he wrote, in describing the relation, during the boyhood of the hero of *The Brushwood Boy*, between school and the non-school world:

"Home was a far-away country, full of ponies and fishing and shooting and men-visitors who interfered with one's plans; but *school was the real world*, where things of vital importance happened and crises arose that must be dealt with promptly and quietly. . . ."

But, in my case, the truth expressed in those words by the great Rudyard about his Galahadish boy hero applied not to school but to college.

No American or Venezuelan or European school or teacher or tutor or fellow-pupil of my childhood and boyhood and early youth left on me anything like the imprint stamped by their English counterparts on the Brushwood Boy. To experience something like that, I had to wait until I went to Harvard.

There, however, I made up for my relatively unimpressed past. At Harvard I experienced something which has made it easy for me to understand what Rudyard Kipling meant.

Long before I elected to go there, I used to ponder much on what I expected from college. Invariably I refused to think of it as a stepping-stone to something else. I soon realized—so soon, in fact, that I am proud of what I insist on considering precocious discernment—that an A.B. tacked onto my name would give me satisfaction even if it did nothing directly in gaining subsequent advantages. If a college degree helped me afterward in the world of business, I reflected, so much the better; if not, what of it? Always I looked upon a college education *as an end not a means*.

Without a college degree, I realized, I never could have any-

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thing approaching spiritual contentment. With it, I am convinced, I shall never feel the bleakness of utter spiritual failure.

Never have I regretted having stuck to college long enough to get an A.B. That is the only degree I ever got; no A.M. or Ph.D. marches haughtily in the wake of my name. But that lone and lowly academic decoration is a source of great spiritual enjoyment to me. Never, even in my worst fits of disillusionment, have I inveighed against my years at Harvard.

As a student there I should have studied much harder than I did. I should have scorned joys of the moment and fruits which wither too soon. I did not. Yet somehow my shame is not so great as it doubtless ought to be. College stamped itself upon me—not so deeply, I confess, as it might have done had I given it a fair opportunity. But, despite flightiness and heedlessness, I like to think that I carry its imprint. And for that I thank God.

Since graduation, whatever idealism I ever had has become pale and tarnished. That it has not been eradicated entirely by post-college years I owe largely to a lasting faith that not everything in the dreams I dreamed as an undergraduate can possibly have been false.

My life after Harvard has not strengthened my belief in better things. Often, I sully myself with cynicism. For that, I submit in my defense, the fault is not entirely mine. As in the case of many contemporaries of my generation, the blame is partly to be placed upon the time in which we have lived and the planet upon which fate has marooned us. Anyhow, wherever I see genuine idealism, I salute it, as a prisoner salutes the freedom which he cannot himself enjoy.

Not long ago, a young girl student at a college where I had just delivered a lecture took me to task, with the fervor of a

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crusading idealist, for what she considered a cynical remark of mine. Unfortunately, I was cross that evening—and I belabored her with more cynicism.

She drew back, confused and unhappy. It was as if she had held toward me a pet dove expecting me to stroke it, and I, instead, had wrung its neck. Abruptly, without another word, she stole away—before I could make amends. If, by chance, she should ever read these words, let them serve as my apology.

In looking back at my Harvard days, I am impressed particularly by the isolation in which we students enveloped ourselves. It is impossible to exaggerate the segregation from the rest of the universe which we felt.

Our life was real life; everybody whose daily round lay outside college groped helplessly in a meaningless world. Even Harvard professors and instructors did not belong entirely to real life; for were they not, after all, liaison officers between our dead past and our unborn future—both things without importance in our living, throbbing present? Immersed in the laws and hierarchies and codes of our little Cambridge cosmos, we felt no genuine interest in the beliefs and points of view, in the rules and formulas, of the strange other cosmos which surrounded ours on all sides.

That other world, we knew, had been our world in earlier years; that other world, we also knew, would in years to come again be our world. Even now it intruded on the isolated planet of Harvard. But we spurned its intrusions—they were no more important to us than a sprained ankle or a cold in the head.

In that other world, we knew, our parents would one day resume their attempts to steer and mold us—abetted, at the proper time, by the males of older generations destined to be

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our bosses in business and by the females of our own vintage earmarked by fate as our partners in matrimony.

All that we knew. But we ignored it. We snapped our fingers at it. In most of us, most of the time, there was no consciousness of the basic evanescence of our college world, no disquieting realization of the grim substantiality of the world which we dismissed as evanescent.

Every time I crossed the West Boston Bridge or Harvard Bridge to Boston, I plunged into mirage. Every time I lunched with my grandmother and aunt in Jamaica Plain, I groped in fog. Every time I made more than cursory contact with the world of finance on State Street—or the world of commerce on Tremont Street—or the world of social doings in the Back Bay—I felt like a man from Mars afraid of losing the last comet for home. And every time I returned to Cambridge—every time I saw, as the trolley car swung around the curve of Massachusetts Avenue and bumped and clanked toward Harvard Square, the outlines of the Yard—I knew that I was back in my own place in my own world, that all I had seen and experienced since I had been away was deception and chimera. God pity the man who keeps his sense of proportion while he is a college student! God pity him as he plods along sneering at unreality—in glacial understanding of the emptiness of a student’s dreams, in icy incomprehension of their wistfulness and pathos and beauty!

Chapter VIII

"A Wand'ring Minstrel . . ."

I HAD just enrolled myself in the freshman class at Harvard. One of my closest friends, a youth who had been at school with me, was now a Harvard junior. Hence he was prone to remind me that, no matter what my personal opinion on the subject might be, I was not a human being but a worm on legs.

I endured this treatment as a well-conducted freshman should. But now and then I objected. There were times when I refused to lie flat on the floor and wriggle about on my belly—the posture and form of locomotion favored by Harvard juniors for Harvard freshmen. In fact, I even wrote a set of verses.

I showed them to my friend, the junior. He read them with an expression on his face which, even among Harvard men, would have caused comment because of its coldness.

"What are these for?" he asked.

"For the Lampoon," I replied.

He stared at me. His eyes registered disbelief that such effrontery could continue to exist for a single minute without attracting a whole flock of thunderbolts. He looked at me for a moment in a way suggesting that he was on the top of a mountain and I at the bottom of the sea. Then—when he had finally discovered where he had put his tongue—he remarked:

"The Harvard Lampoon is a college paper. It is not a school



"Rough-house" picture of Harvard Lampoon staff, including author

"A WAND'RING MINSTREL . . ."

paper. You are no longer in school. You are in college. Throw your verses away."

"No," said I, bravely—though I was badly upset inside. "I'm going to send them to the Lampoon."

He gave me another look. It implied eloquently that what I needed most was a nice cozy talk with an alienist. Then he walked away majestically in the general direction of the junior class.

I sent my verses to the Harvard Lampoon.

The Harvard Lampoon printed them.

They were also reproduced in several dozen newspapers all over the United States. They were reproduced in England. They were reproduced in Shanghai, China. They were reproduced in Life, which was to New York at that time what the New Yorker is now. In fact, Life reproduced them twice, crediting them the first time to the Lampoon and the next to the Shanghai Times. They were reproduced in various anthologies. They were reproduced, finally, on the program of a low-down dance hall on the Bowery—where Tommy Mett and I gleefully picked them out one night, when we were Bowerying, from among thumb marks and beer stains.

I'm going to reproduce those verses again. Surely, they won't mind. By now they must be as accustomed to reproduction as a rabbit:

Oh, the Roman was a rogue,
He erat, was, you hettum,
He ran his automóbilis
And smoked his cigarettum,
He wore a diamond studibus,
An elegant cravattum,
A maxima-cum-laude shirt
And *such* a stylish hattum!

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He loved the luscious hic-haec-hock
And bet on games and equi;
At times he won—at others, though,
He got it in the nequi.
He winked (quo usque tandem?)
At puellas on the Forum
And sometimes even made
Those goo-goo oculorum!

He frequently was seen
At combats gladiatorial
And ate enough to feed
Ten boarders at Memorial;
He often went on sprees
And said, on starting homus:
"Hic labor—opus est,
Oh, where's my hic—hic—domus?"

Although he lived in Rome,
Of all the arts the middle,
He was (excuse the phrase),
A horrid individ'l—
Oh, what a diff'rent thing
Was the homo (dative, hominy),
Of far-away B. C.
From us of Anno Domini!

The Lampoon also printed *Don Stucco*. In fact, it printed him in such a lavish typographical setting that he almost covered a whole page. A noble poem, *Don Stucco*, a poem which—who knows?—may have done much to draw tighter the bonds of international friendship:

Don Stucco was a Spaniard
With fiery temper blest,
His whiskers measured seven feet

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From north-north-east to west,
A wig concealed his noddle,
A scowl concealed the rest.

The next verse told how that volcanic Spaniard decided suddenly, in Madrid or Seville or wherever it was that he resided, to become a Harvard student:

I'll take a course at Harvard
He muttered with an oath,
And then he growled another
And then repeated both.

But, when he got to Cambridge and found it wasn't Spanish but English that they spoke, he fell into an appalling rage and started out to destroy everything in sight. The Harvard faculty and student body, together with the population of Cambridge, fled in terror as Don Stucco came storming and bellowing after them. The police were summoned:

They dropped persuasive boulders
Upon his noble brow,
The third and fourth annoyed him,
The seventh caused a row,
The ninth completely squashed him,
He's in Mount Auburn now.

Mount Auburn is the Cambridge, Mass. cemetery. Having deposited Don Stucco there, I thus wound up the saga about him:

The moral of this story
Is not, I've cause to fear,
Obtrusively apparent
Or exceptionally clear,
But that, accomplished reader,
Is neither there nor here.

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A Harvard professor read that poem. Having done so, he caused to have conveyed to me via his son, who was a fellow-student of mine in the freshman class, his reasoned professorial opinion that Don Stucco seemed to him to betray a lack of grasp on my part of the deeper inner meaning and spiritual significance of being a Harvard undergraduate. Probably he was right.

After Harvard and I had parted company and I had gone to New York to try to earn a livelihood, I continued to write verses. I wrote them surreptitiously during business hours—or, at least, I used to mull them over in a mind that should have been devoted to business.

My first post-Harvard job was as a translator from Spanish into English for a wholesale paper concern located on Worth Street, Manhattan. The value of my services was appraised by my employers at \$15 weekly. After a while it became more and more apparent to me that \$15 every Saturday was insufficient for my needs unless I became a hermit, went to live in a cave, ate only roots, and drank nothing but water, a beverage held in low esteem in the circles of my acquaintance.

The discrepancy between my earnings and the scale of living I had to maintain as a conscientious explorer of Manhattan Island eventually brought me into contact with a lesser executive at the Singer Sewing Machine Co. on lower Broadway, who offered me \$20 a week as a translator of Spanish correspondence for that opulent and far-flung concern.

My news precipitated a crisis on Worth Street. My boss seemed surprised that I could even consider exchanging wholesale paper for sewing machines. Small businesses such as his, he pointed out, were human; vast organizations like the Singer outfit were not.

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"They have no souls," he told me. But I stood my ground. Tactfully but firmly I made it clear to him that I was seeking not souls but cash. He was terribly pained. Eventually, after a silent tussle within himself, he offered me \$18 a week.

"No, twenty!" said I.

It was a deadlock. He turned back with a sigh to selling paper. The negotiations were at an end.

A few days later I became an employe in the export department of the Singer Sewing Machine Co. Among my colleagues there were a Peruvian, a Chinese, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, and a Japanese. The Jap, on a Saturday preceding a Sunday expedition I intended to make to Coney Island, worked hard trying to teach me how to say "Please bring me a cup of tea" in the language of Nippon—for my expedition was to include a visit to a Coney Island imitation of a Japanese tea house.

Next day I invaded the tea house and unloaded what my Japanese co-worker had said—or rather what I thought he had said—upon a young Japanese waitress in native costume. My words interested her—in fact, some of them amused her—but, as far as conveying any meaning was concerned, they might as well have been Icelandic or Choctaw. I was hurt.

"Please bring me a cup of tea," I said coldly—in English. She brought me a cup of tea.

At the Singer offices I continued my Worth Street practice of scribbling verses as well as prose on stray bits of paper when no boss was looking. Using poems and unrhymed trifles as ammunition, I made a series of determined attacks on the columns of *Life*. These were usually repelled by *Life's* editors with a heavy loss to me of temper and confidence in my literary future. But now and then I shot something past the office boy and into the domain of print. For instance:

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A Christian is a man who feels
Repentance on a Sunday
For what he did on Saturday
And is going to do on Monday.

I was very proud of that. It made me feel like a full-fledged cynic and man-of-the-world. But the editors of *Life* (though they printed it) gave me only two dollars for it, which shook my belief in its transcendent merit.

In my early New York era I also used to send some of my scribbled output to the *New York Sun*, an admirably written sheet, the ideal of youths who, like myself, were laboring under the impression that a journalistic apprenticeship was the best preparation for pushing Shakespeare off his pedestal. Some of these products—particularly a considerable number of poems—found their way into the *Sun's* columns.

Immediately after a set of my rhymes appeared there I would rush around during the lunch hour to the headquarters of the paper, then in a low brick building on Park Row close to the Brooklyn Bridge, and apply hopefully for a job. Several high *Sun* executives—including the great Chester Lord—listened, without any visible sign of internal interest, to my pleas; and quite a squad of *Sun* reporters—including Will Irwin—were sent out to see me in the anteroom and get rid of me as soon as possible, which they did with varying degrees of firmness. But never did anything remotely resembling a job heave in sight.

One day it occurred to me that the *New York Times* also printed verses on its editorial page—in small type, hidden far away in an obscure corner, where they could not contaminate the majestic prose effusions that went thundering down adjacent

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columns. So I bundled up four poems, which had been rejected by the Sun, and mailed them to the Times.

Every one of them was printed—on four successive days. I wandered about New York in a trance, feeling as if an exclusive personal millennium had blossomed around me. Promptly, in shameless disloyalty to the Sun, I wrote a poem expressly for the Times. It was inspired by a news dispatch from Russia to the effect that a revolt in the Russian navy had been headed by a man called Schmidt. That name, it seemed to me, failed woefully to measure up to the ancient and honorable traditions of polysyllabic Russian nomenclature. And I said so, in several stanzas.

That poem also was printed on the editorial page of the New York Times, right next to impressive pronouncements about manners, morals, Republicans, Democrats, etc.—with which, I am compelled to admit, it had little if any points of contact. On the day after its appearance, I got a note from Carr V. Van Anda, Managing Editor of the Times, asking me to drop in to see him.

Covering at tremendous speed the distance separating him and me, I presented myself, accompanied by Tommy Mett, at the Times offices in the Times Tower in Times Square. I was ushered into Mr. Van Anda's sanctum.

"There is something about your verses which makes me think you might become a reporter," he told me. "Would you like to try a reporting job?"

"Yes," said I. "When shall I begin?"

"Now!" he replied. "You will get \$15 a week."

Ignoring the ominous fact that I was back in the \$15-a-week class, I thanked Mr. Van Anda and went out to the anteroom,

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where Tommy Mett—in expectation of dining with me—was waiting.

“Beat it,” I said unceremoniously. “I have a job.”

It was then 5.30 P. M. I sat down on a chair in the Times city room and continued to sit there until 8.30 P. M. Nobody paid the slightest attention to me. At last—when I was contemplating chucking the whole thing and rejoining a universe where kind words were not unknown—the acting night city editor, known as Slats McGrew, pulled himself out of a chair at the copy desk and bore down on me like a battleship closing for the kill.

“Fired!” I thought to myself. But I was wrong.

The battleship Slats McGrew was bearing down on me to give me my first assignment. Docking alongside my desk, it said: “Young man, you must have been sitting here three hours! For God’s sake, go out and get yourself something to eat!” I went—hurriedly. I ate—generously. I smiled—happily. For was I not at last a journalist?

Throughout my career on the New York Times, which was long and checkered, I continued to write verses. And always, irrespective of what my pay might be for other work, verses brought extra remuneration.

This remuneration was nothing to write home about. Freddy Mortimer, who did excellently well the Topics of the Times column, and acted, in his spare time, as Poetry Editor, was the man who passed judgment on my lyrics. What Freddy might have done had he been untrammelled by stern higher-ups with little use for poets of any kind will remain forever unknown to me; what he actually did, in carrying out their stern policy, was to pay me from three to seven dollars per poem. That was,

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roughly, at the rate of a dollar per stanza. It was no use to write more than seven stanzas—as I soon found out—for remuneration stopped dead at Stanza VII.

Most of the poems submitted by me to Freddy Mortimer totaled three or four stanzas—and brought me three or four dollars. Now and then I would split the next to the last line in each section and throw in an extra rhyme, in the hope that this poetic lavishness would net me four dollars for a three-stanza product, and five dollars for one with four stanzas. Now and then Freddy would slip me the extra dollar—but not often. To offset these bursts of generosity, he would occasionally assess four short stanzas at three dollars—which brought wailing and gnashing of teeth from the poet.

Carr Van Anda invariably took a fatherly interest in my versifying. Late at night, after the paper had gone to press and everybody was relaxing, he would come out of his den, rubbing his hands in high contentment, like a general after a victory, and, spying me, would grin and remark: "There's the only man I ever hired as a reporter because he wrote verses!"

This lapse on the part of the great managing editor elicited disapproval from certain veteran journalists who considered a newspaper a thing of news and prose compact, with no poetry included unless paid for by the poet at current advertising rates.

Once a veteran of this stamp, who worked on the telegraph desk, was putting in a long night's work while in the grip of a superb hangover. Raising his eyes from a mountain of unread copy before him, he glanced glumly over the city room. At a near-by desk he saw Stephen Chalmers, who occasionally perpetrated poetry. At another desk he spied Tommy Jones, a confirmed poet. At still another desk he caught sight of me,

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probably with that far-away expression in my eyes which betrayed the pressing need for three dollars. Having looked us over malevolently, that sour veteran growled:

"Christ, what an office! You can't throw a brick in any direction without hitting from one to five poets!"

In those days I also found time to write a couple of comic-opera librettos, one of which Henry W. Savage, then a grand mogul of Broadway theatrical life, *almost* produced. He actually got as far as having miniature stage sets made for the scenery. He also introduced me to Raymond Hitchcock, who (Henry W. alleged) would do the star comic rôle in my operetta, and to Flora Zabelle, who, off the stage, was Mrs. Hitchcock. But, just as I was learning to walk on air without stumbling, Henry W. and Raymond and Flora abruptly walked out of my life. Now and then I console myself by picking those librettos out of a trunk and reading them with an appreciation which, I feel sure, no other human being could possibly derive from them. I savor on such occasions the following quotation, supposedly uttered by that character of my creation (a poet) whom, it was alleged, Raymond Hitchcock was going to portray:

Dust are my fancies sweet,
Bitter the things I liked—
I cast my heart at a woman's feet
And found that her shoes were spiked!

And this—out of the mouth of the same imaginary bard:

A woman rules not by her wits
But by her frequent fainting fits.

Several years after the librettos into which I had put those gems had been be-trunked and be-atticked, Henry W. Savage

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ran into me near Forty-Second Street and Broadway and declared:

"Some day you and I are going to do business together." But we have never done any—that is, unless you call by the name of business my writing of several extra verses for a comic song in a Savage Broadway production, none of which was ever sung by the Savage comedian who played the star rôle.

Along with the poems and comic-opera librettos written by me in those days with a view to the acquisition of money went a lot of rhymes intended for the exclusive perusal of a small circle of intimates. These often were of a nature which (quite aside from their intrinsic merit or lack of it) made their appearance in print out of the question. Once, when I was (as usual) hard up, I looked over one of these pariahs.

"Why shouldn't I clean up that poem and sell it to Freddy Mortimer?" I asked myself.

Without losing a minute, I proceeded to expurgate the unprintable parts of the thing and substitute words and sentiments which would have fitted without alteration into a Sunday-school lesson. Then I rushed the dry-cleaned rehash to Freddy Mortimer. He printed it. Friends of mine who knew the ribald first version and saw its innocent second incarnation in the Times were revolted at my cynicism. But I didn't care. Had not cynicism netted me three dollars?

About that same time a verse of mine did a friend a good turn. He was having an awful row with his wife—so awful, in fact, that it eventually culminated in divorce. His cronies used to ask him at intervals how his matrimonial battle was progressing. Meeting me on the street, after he had just heard a batch of these inquiries, he shook my hand with a warmth that astonished me, and said:

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"Thank you, Tom. You are saving me a lot of trouble. Every time anybody asks me about my marital affairs I merely take out of my pocket a copy of that new limerick of yours and hand it to him."

The limerick in question ran thus:

There was a young fellow from Fife,
Who once, in a row with his wife,
Lost half of his toes,
Two-thirds of his nose,
One ear, seven teeth, and his life!

Shortly after my début as a reporter, the New York Times plunged into a ferocious political campaign against William Randolph Hearst, who was running for high office. All Mr. Van Anda's pet poets were summoned to his sanctum and ordered to assail Hearst in poetry, no holds barred.

Late one night I placed before the big boss an anti-Hearst effusion which grazed the bounds of parliamentary language continually and overstepped them in at least three places. Mr. Van Anda was delighted with the stuff. In the peremptory manner favored by managing editors under pressure, he shouted to an office boy:

"Rush this down to the composing room and tell them to put it on the editorial page right away!"

In a minute or so, the composing room reported:

"But the editorial page is just going to press."

"Well, stop it until you have put these verses in!" commanded Mr. Van Anda.

The New York Times was stopped until my poem denouncing Hearst had been shoved, red hot, into the poetry corner of the editorial page. That incident puffed me up with poetic

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pride. Even to this day there are occasions when I cannot resist strutting about and remarking to anyone within hearing:

“Joshua may have stopped the sun—but *I* stopped the Times!”

Chapter IX

"A Time Forever Gone . . ."

ARTEMUS WARD once wrote: "Harvard College is pleasantly situated in Parker's Bar, at the corner of School and Tremont Streets." In that description I am conscious of a certain inadequacy: does it not stress one aspect of Harvard to the detriment of other aspects? Nevertheless, it has its points.

In my early days as a New York journalist one might have written with equal justification: "The New York Times is pleasantly situated in Shanley's bar, at the corner of Forty-Second Street and Broadway." That, too, might have been open to the accusation of onesidedness; it might have caused Adolph Ochs, in his sanctum across the street, and Henry J. Raymond and George Jones, in their graves, to feel that my description of my journalistic Alma Mater was in a way incomplete. Nevertheless, like Artemus Ward's description of my academic Alma Mater, it had its points.

Shanley's bar, in the first part of the twentieth century, was not a bar in the generally accepted meaning of the term. It was merely a "service bar" established in the back regions of Shanley's restaurant on Times Square for the purpose of supplying drinks to Shanley's waiters in order that they, in turn, might transport them to Shanley's customers in the restaurant proper. But, by special dispensation of Tom and Mike Shanley, who ran the place, members of the staff of the New York Times had the freedom of that service bar. At all hours of the day—and

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through the night until four o'clock in the morning or thereabouts—we could jostle Irish waiters, as they lined up in front of the small counter, and order drinks from the Irish bartender behind it—to be paid for in cash (on rare occasions) or (with alarming frequency) by means of signed slips of paper. These were accepted by the Shanley financial department as promises of future payment in deference to another dispensation promulgated, with touching trust in their fellow-men, by the brothers Tom and Mike.

As there were no seats in Shanley's service bar, the staff of the New York Times had either to stand in front of the bartender's narrow counter or sit on the backstairs leading from the bar to the "Roman Court," which was the grandiose name given by the Shanley brothers to their upstairs banquet halls. (I used to say that Times men with a knowledge of Latin had obtained it while sleeping off in the Roman Court the consequences of hectic nights along Broadway.) Often members of the Times staff—reporters, copy readers, ornaments of the business staff, even editors—could be found festooned, tier upon tier, on Shanley's backstairs—united, in defiance of the varying categories of the journalistic caste system, by the leveling bond of thirst.

Now and then the enthusiasm for Shanley's felt among employees of the source of All-the-News-That's-Fit-to-Print was such that the backstairs got jammed to capacity and the service bar became almost inaccessible to the waiters who were trying to do their duty toward cash customers in the front regions. On one occasion of this sort, at about two A. M., Fred Birchall, Night City Editor of the Times, confronted with the necessity of getting a big story covered—and covered p.d.q.—looked up from the pile of copy before him to see a city room with practi-

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cally no signs whatsoever of human habitation. Its chairs were unoccupied. Its desks were steeped in solitude. Its typewriters gave forth no sound. Convulsively pulling his little beard—a sign, with Fred, that trouble was brewing for somebody—he shouted to an office boy:

“Fetch them!”

The office boy fetched them—being an office boy steeped in a precocious knowledge of early twentieth-century New York journalism. He found them just across Broadway, on Shanley’s backstairs, all happily cemented together. As they came trooping into the city room, Fred Birchall, pulling at his beard until it almost came out by the roots, thundered:

“Gentlemen, I wish you to understand once and for all that the New York Times is not an annex of Shanley’s bar!”

During that epoch I wrote a poem (for private circulation). It dealt with the crisis-breeding Times-Shanley situation. It purported to portray the meditations of a Times reporter who, brought face to face with the cruelty of fate and the high cost of living and the fickleness of woman and all that sort of thing, consoled himself by ending up each one of a gloom-soaked succession of stanzas with the refrain:

But Shanley’s won’t be shut,
That booze-dispensing hut. . . .

Tom and Mike Shanley, I learned, didn’t like that poem. Their feeling in the matter, as conveyed to me indirectly, was that, like Artemus Ward’s description of Harvard, it emphasized one department of a highly meritorious institution at the expense of other departments; that it failed to meet fully the requirements of the Matthew Arnold formula that, to grasp the nature of a thing, you must “see it steady and see it whole.”

On the Sunday Magazine of the New York Times, my boss

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for a number of years was Alden March. He also was one of my best friends. When I first worked under him, I was one of his regular staff of Sunday writers. Afterward I became Assistant Sunday Editor; and later—when March had returned to his native Philadelphia to run his first love in journalism, the Philadelphia Press—I was Acting Sunday Editor of the Times. In fact, I have arrived, by a process of elimination, at the conclusion that for a while I was that paper's full-fledged Sunday Editor.

For some months around the end of World War I there was not really any Sunday Magazine; in its place a number of pages devoted to features appeared every Sunday scattered about in various parts of the paper. The material on those pages was chosen by me. The illustrations for them were ordered by me. The pages were assembled by me. They were edited by me. They were projected by me through the composing room and onto the printing presses and into the maw of a waiting world. Therefore, if *I* was not Sunday Editor, who was?

Alden March ran the Sunday department like a club. It was a very pleasant club. When I first joined, other regular club members were Charles Willis Thompson and George Mac-Adam.

Charley Thompson wrote (and writes) excellently and had (and has) an incredible fund of knowledge of American politics and history and an equally formidable grasp on literature in general. When we worked together, Shakespeare and Charley were on intimate terms; his regular form of salutation, when he met one of his fellow-workers on Broadway, was:

"Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud
Without our special wonder?"

which lent to casual street encounters dignity and worth.

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Charley despised the best-sellers and near-best-sellers and the whole output of ephemeral volumes touted vociferously by the ballihooligans of the publishing world of those days. "Every time a new book appears, I read an old one," he used to tell us scornfully.

Long stays in Washington as regular correspondent there for the Times and World had given him an extraordinary knowledge of men and things in political life. Several presidents of the United States knew him well and esteemed him highly. Late one night, I remembered, he came into the Times office in New York from Washington with a big feature story under his hat about the political situation. As he had little time to get it down to the composing room—and as I was a rapid performer on the typewriter—he asked me to take dictation from him (to be rewarded later, he solemnly covenanted, at Shanley's). After dictating several sentences beginning, "it can be stated on the best authority," and "it has been learned from unimpeachable sources," he suddenly stopped, tossed his head impatiently, and blurted out:

"Tommy, isn't it the limit to have to paraphrase into tripe like that something which was said to me directly by the President of the United States?" That's just where Charley had obtained his material—at the White House, while he was sitting beside the President's desk. But the Washington journalistic code forbade him from quoting the Chief Executive.

George MacAdam was a delightful journalist of Scottish blood. When the Muse of news inspired him, he wrote beautifully. George got the first interview ever granted by O. Henry—and a fine piece of work it was, as written by him and published in a place of honor in the Times Sunday Magazine by Alden March.

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George loved the circus. Whenever he got disgusted with Times Square he would talk darkly about joining the Barnum and Bailey forces and getting away from it all. At the Madison Square Garden (then *really* on Madison Square), where the circus performed when it came to town, George was intimately acquainted with an enormous number of men, women and animals. One day he towed me down there in his wake and introduced me to the Fat Lady, Zip the What-Is-It, the Obongo Dwarfs, three elephants, and a zebra. This visit, as usual, filled George with the craving to abandon New York and find Romance as a circus man.

"I'll do it!" he announced. "Dexter Fellowes will give me a job (Dexter Fellowes was the press representative of the circus). 'I'm sick of all the falseness and foolishness of Times Square! I'll do it!'"

"When?" I asked.

"Tomorrow!"

But tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow crept in this petty snail's pace from day to day across Times Square, and George was still with us. The circus was his Carcassonne.

The Sunday Times Club was sedulously scolded and mothered by Anna Bromm, Alden March's blonde secretary. Miss Bromm, always spick-and-span herself, believed that the office should be kept speckless—not for her the dust and dirt and torn paper and inky blotches deemed indispensable by ancient tradition to the proper functioning of journalism!

One day she reproved George MacAdam and me because of a certain untidiness noticeable in the immediate surroundings of our desks. Retiring purposefully into a corner, George and I decided that the time had come to assert ourselves or be consigned forevermore to the legions of the bossed.

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We forthwith collected a handful apiece of dust and cigarette ashes and mud-just-off-shoes and variegated odds and ends from the department's wastebaskets. Then, with the step of crusaders, we marched over to Miss Bromm's desk. We came to a halt like highly disciplined soldiery. Looking her balefully in the eye, we dumped our handfuls of refuse at her feet. Then we hurried away. We had asserted ourselves.

When I was a member of the staff of the Sunday Magazine I used to take part in some grand poker games. (First, I have described drinking. Second, I am about to deal with gambling. Third, I shall *not* take up what would appear to be the next logical step in the progress of this chapter. Disappointed readers will please form on the left and not disturb other readers by unseemly noise.) Alden March and Ralph Graves, City Editor of the Times, and Rex Cleveland and Pop Hart and Doc Thorne and I and other Times men were the nucleus of a poker club. Formed without rules or by-laws, it endured for years. It brought great joy to all of us and serious financial discomfiture to me. Each of us was privileged to go out into the non-Times world and bring in recruits for the game. During the existence of the club some thirty or forty pokerites participated at one time or another in our sessions.

As a poker player, I have all the qualities of one who should devote himself to something else. If Harvard had provided a course in that noble example of the American way of life, the E which the instructor would undoubtedly have given me would have been due entirely to the fact that the university's rules prevented him from digging deeper into the bowels of the alphabet and fishing up something really descriptive of my poker ability—Z, for instance.

Yet my low status as a player failed completely to make me

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unpopular with my fellow-players. In fact, it did the reverse. Never before had I been so popular. Never since have I been so popular. In those days I used to say that, after one of my trips to Europe, the news that I was back in town would spread like the breath of spring among friends of mine who had long given up the idea of paying rent or buying new shoes—and it would cause them to scream with elation and deluge me with invitations to join them in a little game which they wished ardently to stage in honor of my safe return from desperate seas and far-away lands. It is a sweet thing to look back on happy hours of the past and realize that, among the ingredients which made up the liking of my friends for me, none was more potent than the knowledge that they played better poker than I did.

At times, though, they relied a bit too much on my inability to master the ABC of this great pastime. For instance, there was a certain night when six poker players and T. R. Ybarra were deep in the absorbing work of trying to annex each other's money. A jackpot was opened—a big one.

One man drew one card. Another drew two cards. A third drew no cards at all. Undaunted by these signs of coming storm—or rather, unconscious of them—T. R. Ybarra *drew three cards*. When the rest of the company recovered the use of their faculties the game progressed.

The man who had drawn one card laid down a flush. The man who had drawn two cards laid down four deuces. The man who had stood pat laid down a full house. The man who had drawn three cards (T. R. Y.) laid down *four fives*. Amid looks of bitter hatred, he scooped in enough to keep him going, if he watched his step, for weeks.

"This is where friendship ceases!" said Alden March.

"You gilded baboon!" said Ralph Graves.

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For the rest of the night, scarcely anybody spoke to me except to ask how many cards I wanted.

Most of the members of that poker club were married. I was not. The married players used to stage poker parties at their homes in Manhattan or somewhere in the surrounding District of Commutia; and their respective wives used to provide great quantities of admirably prepared foodstuffs and everything needed for variegated drinks. Then they would vanish to mysterious parts of the house or apartment involved, after we had all politely but half-heartedly chorused: "Oh, surely you're going to take a hand in the game?"

After several of these parties, all things pointed to me as the next host to our poker club. At that time I was living in Westover Court, a galaxy of apartments owned by Vincent Astor and situated on the site of the gigantic Paramount Building of today—a circumstance which has prompted me, in subsequent years, when I pass that mammoth expression of the tremendous power of Hollywood, to point to it and announce blithely: "Don't you think Westover Court got a pretty good tombstone?"

A bachelor, I reasoned, must needs stage a show capable of throwing into total eclipse all the puny efforts of friends struggling in the fetters of matrimony. Only the best, I decided, was to figure at my Westover Court poker session. So I proceeded, first, to invest in a box of Corona-Corona cigars instead of the modest weeds which an inhibited financial status imposed upon my smoking friends. Next, in order to overshadow completely the eatables provided by their loving wives, I arranged with those in authority at the new and glittering Shanley's at Seventh Avenue and Forty-Third Street, which had replaced the one

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with the backstairs Club and the Roman Court, to send to my Westover apartment the world's most superb battalion of assorted sandwiches. Then, proud and confidently expectant, I rested from my labors.

My friends gathered. On the table in the living room of my flat was my box of Corona-Coronas—hospitably open. On the sideboard was a tray of sandwiches of an excellence, I felt sure, such as had not been known up to that time by any member of the human race.

Alden March took one of my expensive cigars. He puffed at it in a suspicious sort of way. His manner showed that he had taken an instantaneous dislike to it. He discarded it. Ralph Graves, having sniffed at another, decided promptly that he did not wish to cultivate further relations with it. Rex Cleveland bestowed a disapproving glance on a third Corona-Corona. Then he reached into his pocket and produced a bunch of smelly things shaped like cigars.

"Try one of these, fellows," he suggested. "They're damned good stogies, considering the few cents I paid for them."

Alden March took one. Ralph Graves took one. Rex took one. For the rest of the night nobody paid the slightest attention to my Corona-Coronas—which had set me back heavens knows how many dollars!

Then it became glaringly apparent that nobody wanted my sandwiches. One of the players would cast an eye now and then in their direction. But when I pressed him to eat, he would inform me that he wasn't hungry—"had a lot of stuff at dinner, you know"—etc. etc. Finally, I prevailed upon Rex to taste a sandwich. Next day he tried to convince me that it had given him ptomaine poisoning!

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As a host, I decided, I did not shine.

I got some consolation for my social failure, however, out of reflecting what a joke that poker party was on my young brother, Alejandro. He had come up from Venezuela shortly before, obtained a job in downtown New York, and installed himself in my apartment at Westover Court, where he slept on a couch in my living room. Since he had to rise early—and since I, in solemn appreciation of my duties as an elder brother, wouldn't let him get into the poker game—we had entered into a compact.

In consideration of the fact that the meetings of the poker club at my apartment deprived him of his regular sleeping quarters, it was agreed that he should rent himself a room at a hotel when there was such a meeting and pay for it out of his own pocket. And, in consideration of this—to him—serious financial commitment, it was further stipulated that I must turn over to him 25 per cent of my winnings in each Westover Court poker game.

Early on the morning after that Corona-Corona-Shanley-sandwich game, my young brother came rushing into our apartment. It was disheveled and rank from the stale smoke of cheap stogies. On the table lay my box of scorned expensive cigars. Near by languished the tray of despised and costly provender. My brother roused me from sleep.

"How much did you win?" he asked, his eyes bright with greed.

"Why, you damned fool," I muttered crossly, "*I lost seventy-six dollars!*"

Alejandro had never thought of that possibility. Minus the price of the hotel room he had been compelled to rent, he

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dragged himself disconsolately away to his job in downtown New York.

It was very much the same way the next time I gave a poker party at Westover.

"How much did you win?" he asked breathlessly on the morning after.

"Not a cent!" I grunted, again roused from slumber. "I lost eighty-four dollars! Let me go back to sleep!"

"My God!" ejaculated Alejandro. "Last night I was so broke that I got myself a miserable attic room in a cheap boarding house, and, when I woke up this morning, I found that snow had drifted in through an open skylight and spread itself all over the bed coverings, until I looked like a Christmas card! And now you tell me that. . . ."

Further remarks on his part were prevented by a violent fit of choking.

Joyce Kilmer used to do a weekly interview for Alden March. Being both a poet and a convert to Catholicism, he was partial to interviewing Irish bards. The thoughts of Irish bards on innumerable subjects appeared in the Times Sunday Magazine until Alden March urged upon Kilmer the merits of other persons available for interviewing who wrote prose and belonged to non-Irish sections of the human race.

Once Kilmer insisted imperiously that I quit work instantly and repair with him across the street to the Astor.

"The free lunch over there has the best Virginia ham sandwiches in the world!" he caroled. We hastened to the Astor.

On the way over I asked: "Are those Virginia ham sandwiches really as good as you say?"

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"Oh, perhaps I'm exaggerating. They're just pretty good, that's all," answered Kilmer, in a bored way. He seemed to have lost all interest in our expedition.

At the Astor I obtained from the ambassador-in-white behind the free-lunch counter two Virginia ham sandwiches and proffered one to Joyce. He refused it curtly.

"For the love of Mike!" I ejaculated. "You bring me all the way over here when I have a lot of work to do by telling me that the Astor has the best free-lunch Virginia ham sandwiches in the world and then you won't eat one! What the devil's the matter with you?"

Kilmer looked at me shamefacedly.

"I forgot," he mumbled, "that it was Friday."

Kilmer loved to match quarters. One day he came to me, as I sat hard at work at my desk, and said:

"I'll match you for a dime."

We matched. Kilmer won.

"Now I'll match you for a nickel," he said.

We matched. Kilmer won.

"Now," he announced triumphantly, "I can carry out the plan which brought me here. I had only a dime. I won another dime. That gave me twenty cents. I won a nickel. That gave me twenty-five cents. Now—I'll match you for a quarter!"

We matched. He lost. And he returned to whatever Irish poet of the moment was sitting in his private office.

Another devotee of matching quarters was Alexander Woollcott. When he was on the New York Times he used to wander from floor to floor looking for victims—and he did not miss the ninth floor, I assure you, where Kilmer and Alden March and I and other inveterate matchers had their cubbyholes. Even in the composing room, when Alec was making up the Times

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dramatic pages and I was midwifing the *Times Sunday Magazine*, we used to match—bringing our quarters down hard on the steel tables, while Fred Schuyler and Pete Keenan and Jimmy Shea and other Knights of the Linotype looked on appreciatively.

On my return from one of my trips to Europe I met Alec under the Sixth Avenue Elevated. We hadn't seen each other for three months, but he gave me not one word of greeting—nor I him. Instead, he took a quarter from his side pocket. I took a quarter from mine. And there, right in the midst of the traffic, with L trains roaring overhead, we matched. I won.

"Bless you!" said I.

"Damn you!" said Alec.

We parted—not to see each other again for another three months.

As a reporter on the *New York Times* Alec Woolcott was as witty as he is now as a national celebrity. One night he was sitting in the Hunting Room of the Astor with Laurence Updegraff and me. Something said by him—I have completely forgotten what—was so completely typical of his wit that I remarked:

"Alec, if you were found dead, one hundred and fifty men would be arrested on suspicion!"

Many years went by. Never—or hardly ever—did I think of that remark. Then, when I was London Correspondent of the *New York Times*, Alec appeared in London, on one of his regular tours of Europe. We lunched together. Over our coffee, he asked suddenly:

"Tommy, how many men did you say would be arrested on suspicion if I were found dead?"

"One hundred and fifty."

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"What! Is that all? Why, in New York they're saying two thousand."

"Well, you are better known now."

Alec Woolcott and I are crazy about Gilbert and Sullivan. Our knowledge of the works of the scintillating Savoyards is so comprehensive that I honestly think we belong in a class with F.P.A.—which takes a lot of belonging.

One day Alec, just back from Europe, stopped me on the street.

"I have been wanting to see you for days," he said, "because I have a story which you will enjoy more than anybody else I know. In London I ran across Irving Berlin. He was dining in a restaurant in Piccadilly. I said to him: 'Pay your check. Put on your hat.' He looked puzzled.

"What do you mean? . . ." he began.

"Put on your hat, I tell you, and follow me," I insisted. Still puzzled, he obeyed.

"I led him along Piccadilly. I led him across Piccadilly Circus. I led him into the Haymarket. And, all the while, he grew more puzzled and more desirous of enlightenment. But each time he stopped in protest, I would snap: 'Come on, I tell you! Shut up! Follow me!' And he would shut up and fall into step beside me.

"I led him over Trafalgar Square. I led him into the Strand. I led him down Savoy Hill and onto the Embankment. I led him to the Embankment Gardens. I stopped in front of the memorial bust of Sir Arthur Sullivan. And there I turned to him and I frowned on him and I barked at him:

"Take off your hat, damn you, take off your hat!"

Shanley's service bar was the starting point for most of the small-hours-of-the-morning expeditions into New York State of a young member of the Times staff who combined, in ex-

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actly equal proportions, a strong craving for the less admirable phases of city life with an equally strong yearning for the most admirable phases of country life. Just before dawn he urged me again and again, on Shanley's backstairs, to forget the great cruel American metropolis and disappear with him into the fastnesses of Rockland County, N.Y.

"In a short while a milk train will be starting," he would tell me. "We have just time enough to catch it. At four o'clock we'll get off at some little station many miles from Times Square. We'll sleep two or three hours in a field—it's a beautiful night. Then we'll start walking in the early morning through beautiful scenery, breathing healthful country air, until lunch, which we'll get from a farmer at a farmhouse. Then, after another few miles of hiking, we'll take a train at some other little rural station, and be back in New York, ready for work, early tomorrow afternoon. How about it?"

The amazing part of it was that he meant every word of what he said. Again and again he caught that milk train, took that walk, ate that lunch, caught that train back. But—I am ashamed to say—he never got me to go with him. Nor George MacAdam. Nor anybody. The thought of our night's rest—not on a field in Rockland County but in a bed a few blocks away—was too much for us. As our nature-minded friend sprinted for the milk train, his colleagues crawled away sleepily to one or another of the West Forties.

In those days four young reporters on the Times staff formed a Damon-and-Pythias (multiplied by two) friendship. They dined together. They supped together. They walked together. They dreamed together. They dug deeply into their respective souls and revealed to each other the results of their excavations. Their names are Barry Benefield, David Joseph, Max Perkins,

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and Bill Washburn. All four have risen to enviable pinnacles of human achievement. David Joseph is City Editor of the New York Times. Barry Benefield is a well-known novelist. Max Perkins is the head of a famous publishing house. Bill Washburn is the publisher of this book.

Reporters are usually shown on the screen and the stage as individuals of such cocksureness and conceit that it is a wonder they ever get any "stories" at all. The Bohemian side of American journalism—and its carelessness and shiftlessness—have been persistently stressed in pictures and plays dealing with the life of those who assemble and write the columns of type of which our papers are made.

As a matter of fact, journalistic Bohemia has been fighting a losing fight in the United States for many years. Careless actions and shiftless ways and heavy drinking have been growing ever rarer among the members of the reportorial staffs of our responsible newspapers—rarer, indeed, than among certain non-journalists who insist still on thinking of journalists as raffish victims of booze, devotees of assorted dissipation, exponents of general looseness of demeanor and thought.

Even the newspapermen of another era—the era in which I first knew journalism—though many of them were far from admirable in many ways—were no more like their caricatures on stage and screen than the stage Englishman was (or is) like a real Englishman, or a stage American (as shown on foreign stages and screens) like a real American. It behooves Americans not in journalism who are still convinced that the stage-and-screen American reporter is a faithful delineation of the real article to remember that the stage American most familiar to foreign audiences is a highly unattractive creature exuding

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uncouthness and cheapness, and loudness, without tact or discrimination, sure of his eternal rightness especially when he is most wrong, believing in nothing but himself, respecting only those who, like himself, are interested solely in money. That picture of the average American stubbornly nurtured in foreign minds is not a true picture. Neither is the picture of the average American newspaperman in the average American mind.

Nowhere is *esprit de corps* stronger than among the newspapermen of this country. Nowhere is there such enforcement of a code—a peculiar and, to outsiders, frequently incomprehensible code—but a code just the same. That code, unwritten and intangible, causes editors to feel as certain that their reporters will bring back the stories to which they have been assigned as any human being can be certain of anything in this uncertain universe.

It is the code which made Greg Humes of the old New York World, mortally injured in a railroad wreck, push a dollar bill into the hand of a little boy standing beside him and gasp, just before he died: "Phone my office. Tell them there's a big story that I can't cover because I'm all smashed up. Hurry!"

It is the code that makes adventurous men, whose adventurousness has made them war correspondents, resist the temptation to charge with soldiers against enemy positions—to taste on their lips the salt and smoke and sting of battle which every adventurous man longs to taste at least once—simply because their first duty is to get their story to their paper, by cable, by telegraph, by wireless, by phone, by car, by courier—any way, at any cost, provided it gets there and gets there promptly.

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It is the code which made Carr Van Anda, managing editor of the New York Times, snap out, when we told him that Admiral Peary had discovered the North Pole: "*Where's his story?*" Peary's world-shaking discovery was all very well; Peary's triumph after years of doggedness and disappointment was all very well; but what mattered to Van Anda was the fact that Peary had agreed to give the New York Times the story of his discovery at the earliest possible moment.

"*Where's his story?*"—those words, imagined on the lips of managing editors and city editors and Sunday editors, have had, for a whole army of unsung reporters, whom the world thought merely brash and dissolute, the same driving force that a famed and fatal order from a British general had for the six hundred men of the Light Brigade.

The code of journalism breeds terrific tension. Newspapermen often work under a pressure that would wreck a high percentage of those engaged in other forms of work. As a result of this it is only natural that the reactions, after work is over, of those forced to function under such tension and pressure are correspondingly violent. A newspaperman's relaxation after getting a story is likely to be shockingly devoid of prudence and sense of proportion; it is likely to preclude reasoning and defy consequences. That is not so true of today, with its efficiency, as it was in the old days. But what I have just said still goes, to a certain extent, for present-day American journalism—and it is of that reaction, not of the drive which preceded it, that the public too often thinks.

Years ago, in the bad old epoch of our newspapers, I was sent by Alden March to get an interview for the New York Times Sunday Magazine from a famous efficiency engineer. At that time efficiency—real, scientific, thought-out efficiency

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—was just getting into its stride. Businesses which hired efficiency engineers were daring pioneers: believers in the old hit-or-miss methods, the old doctrine of results by trial and error, still held their heads high and their upper lips stiff in business as well as in journalism.

That highly efficient efficiency engineer suddenly said to me:

"Know something? You newspapermen are rated extraordinarily high in efficiency."

I registered surprise—and delight.

"Why?" I asked.

"Simplest thing in the world. No matter what happens, a newspaper *must* come out. You reporters *must* get your stuff and get it into shape for printing in tomorrow's paper. No excuse is accepted. No explanation gets a hearing. Every day—seven days a week—fifty-two weeks a year—*that paper of yours must come out*. Therefore, around midnight, night after night, every newspaper is a madhouse—every editor is a madman committing murder with a blue pencil—every reporter is a lunatic pounding a typewriter. Yet coolness controls all this madness—coolness and resourcefulness and judgment—*and efficiency*. The deadline comes and goes—the presses start roaring—the paper has gone to press. Next morning it is on thousands of breakfast tables. What put it there? *A damned efficient form of efficiency*. Yes, you fellows are rated right at the top by efficiency engineers."

"Newspapers have speeded up, my boy," said Fred Birchall of the New York Times years ago to a comrade who was extolling an era of journalism that was less efficient but more human, less sober but more appealing. When Fred said those words he said them with a touch of nostalgia. He did not want the old days back; but he did not want them unjustly damned.

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Like all good newspapermen, he knew that the code by which good newspapermen live and die was as compelling in those bad old days as it is in those of our stream-lined present. The New York journalism of my apprenticeship was dream-lined, not stream-lined; and, with the advent of stream-lining, something lovable has gone out of it, just as it has gone out of the rest of New York.

One of the biggest newspaper stories that ever "broke" in New York was the *Titanic* disaster. After several days of flaming headlines about the rescue of hundreds of survivors by the *Carpathia*—a rescue made possible by Guglielmo Marconi's invention of the wireless—the whole city was thrilled by the news that the *Carpathia* was headed for her pier on the Lower West Side.

Managing Editor Van Anda of the Times jumped to the great story with his usual terrific driving force. He hired an entire floor of a small hotel at the corner of West Fourteenth Street and the North River waterfront. He had special telephones installed. He assigned practically the whole regular reportorial force of the Times to the story. He pressed into service every member of the Sunday staff—including me.

As soon as I showed up, Mr. Van Anda beckoned me into his office and introduced me to a quiet, unassuming man sitting there.

"Take this gentleman down to the *Carpathia's* pier," said the big boss. The quiet man thanked Mr. Van Anda over and over again. Then he thanked me for going to so much trouble.

As we approached the Cunard pier a policeman stopped us.

"Can't get through!" he shouted.

I told him the unassuming man's name.

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"Come right through!" said the policeman, making way for us. The unassuming man thanked him. Then he thanked me again. All the way across West Street he told me how grateful he was for Mr. Van Anda's kindness and my kindness and that policeman's kindness.

"Hey! You can't get through!" snapped another policeman at the *Carpathia's* gangplank.

I told him my companion's name.

"Come right through!" said the policeman, respectfully falling back.

My companion thanked him warmly. "Everybody is so polite to me," he said, as he stepped onto the gangplank.

Just then there was a charge of policemen and I was swept back. But the unassuming, courteous man whom I had brought down from the Times office was by now safely on the gangplank headed for the *Carpathia*, to find out all about the thrilling rescue, thanks to the wireless, of hundreds of men and women and children. His name was Guglielmo Marconi.

Chapter X

"I Tune My Supple Song . . ."

VASTLY encouraged by the attitude of the great Mr. Van Anda toward my verses—and undaunted by that of the soulless veteran with the hangover—I poured poems into the New York Times. Most of them were inspired by the current grist of news—as, for instance, a series of "Russian Popular Songs." These were ditties of a bloodthirsty nature, dealing with the deadly feud between the adherents of the Czar in Russia and the Russian Nihilists, which was constantly getting into the front-page headlines of those days.

The "Russian Popular Songs" concerned variegated forms of alleged bomb-throwing by Nihilists at Czarists of high eminence, mostly dukes. For instance, one of the series told of a Nihilist family, rabidly anti-Romanoff, which, having lost several of its members as a result of careless handling of explosives, pointed unanimously at the family's most youthful member and chanted in unison:

It's sister Jennie's turn to throw the bomb,
Because the last one did for brother Tom,
And mother cannot slay
A duke a yard away—
It's sister Jennie's turn to throw the bomb,

Then there was Precocious Petrovitch, who had developed the habit of practising bomb-throwing on members of his family before going out after dukes. This habit greatly an-

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noyed Petrovitch's kith and kin—so much so that they pranced about singing:

Reserve a niche
And reserve it well
For Petrovitch
In a padded cell!
What boy that lives
To bombs would hitch
His relatives
Like Petrovitch?

And readers of the Times were told about the heedless little Muscovite maid whose zeal as a bomb-thrower was so marred by untidiness as to cause her mother to exclaim

In loud and stern rebuke:
"Do you suppose
You'll get new clothes
Each time you kill a duke?"

At one period in my versifying career I used to describe alleged meetings with melancholy little individuals, seated in the middle of a clump of woods or some such place, who, at the slightest provocation, would tell me about the awful sufferings that were torturing their souls. For instance, there was "The Unclassic" (duly converted by me, thanks to Freddy Mortimer, into four dollars):

I met a little writing chap
Who filled the air with sighs,
I gave him a tremendous slap
And said: "I sympathize!
Do tell me whence your sorrow comes
I ask— I beg— I urge—"
He wildly twiddled both his thumbs
And handed out this dirge:

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"There are no world-truths stored in me!
Alas! Would that my humble pen
Might scribble elementally
And mark an epoch now and then!"

"Do not be sad!" I loudly cried,
"Be light and gay instead."
"I'm never classic, sir," he sighed,
"And hardly ever read."
I soon felt bored; I edged away,
To seek more lively chums,
And, as I went, I heard him say,
Still twiddling both his thumbs:

"There are no world-truths stored in me,
A fact which quite precludes, of course,
(That is, so far as I can see),
My posing as a Cosmic Force!"

At about this same time I also alleged that I had been involved in another similar adventure—likewise worth four dollars from the Times, via Freddy Mortimer. The versified description of that adventure *I hereby claim once and for all as my own*—in the teeth of that prolific writer "Anon.," to whom it has been credited in at least one anthology:

HEARTH-YEARN'S

A melancholy little man
Was seated on the ground,
He showed supreme indifference
To everything around.
"Why do not you run home?" I asked,
"And tumble into bed?"
He looked at me
Expressively
And presently he said:

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"One rubber plant can never make a home—
Not even when combined with brush and comb,
And spoon—and fork—and knife—
And graphophone—and wife—
No! Something more is needed for a home!"

I cried: "What does your dwelling lack?"

"The pretty hearth-side tone?
The note of domesticity?"

He gave a fearful groan.
"Alas!" he sighed, while from his seat
He slowly upward bobbed,
And donned his hat,
"A flat's a flat!"

Together then we sobbed:

"One rubber plant can never make a home!
One day did not suffice for building Rome!
One gas-log and a cat
Can't civilize a flat.
No! Something more is needed for a home!"

Let the late Carolyn Wells take the blame for my inclusion here of "A Little Swirl of Vers Libre." Didn't she put it into her *Anthology of Light Verse*? She did. Here it is:

A LITTLE SWIRL OF VERS LIBRE

(Not covered, strange to say, by the Penal Code.)

I am numb with world-pain;
I sway most violently as the thoughts course through me,
And up and down me,
And athwart me—
Thoughts of cosmic matters,
Of the mergings of worlds within worlds,
And unutterabilities,
And room-rent,

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And other tremendously alarming phenomena,
Which stab me,
Rip me most outrageously,
 (Without a semblance, mind you, of respect for the Hague Con-
 vention's rules governing soul-slitting)
Ay, as with the poniard of the Finite pricking the rainbow-bubble
 of the Infinite!—
(SOME figure, that!)
(SOME little rush of syllables, that!)—
And make me (are you still whirling at my coat-tails, reader?)
Make me—ahem—where was I?
Oh, yes—make me,
In a sudden overwhelming fit of soul-shattering rebellion,
Fall flat on my face!

Let responsibility for the quotation here of the following poem forever dog the footsteps of Marshall Kernochan. Years after it had been decently buried he tried to quote it at a dinner which we both attended. So I exhumed it.

They roamed between
 Delicious dells,
He had sixteen
 Ecstatic spells.

He said: "Yon herds!
 Yon stretch of fence!
Yon frequent birds!
 Immense! Immense!

"Yon blossoms shy,
 Yon blazing sun,
Yon wondrous sky—
 A1—! A1—!

"My own, my sweet,
 Do you not glow

"I TUNE MY SUPPLE SONG . . ."

With bliss complete?"
She answered "No!"

He stopped. He eyed
Her in a trance.
He almost fried
Her with his glance.

Then walked he East
And walked she West,
His wrath increased
As he progressed.

For who would wed
With such a one
When all is said
And all is done?

Let Sophie Kerr Underwood stagger under the responsibility for my reproduction here of "Laissez-Faire"—or, as some prefer to call it, "Tommy's Cheese Song"—just as she has staggered for many years under the onus of having originally put it into print (and paid for it) when she was Editor of the Something-or-Other:

Beneath the softly swaying trees
I love to dream about Romance,
And eat the various kinds of cheese
From France.

And while I'm there, my folks, in mobs,
Come galloping across the lea,
To offer simply splendid jobs
To me.

Clerk in a famous downtown bank,
Cashier in Broad Street, same in Wall—

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Scribe, editor—I merely thank
Them all.

And then, in anger most profound,
In ire that really is the goods,
They gallop round and round and round
The woods.

They quite forget reserve and tact,
They wave their arms like weather vanes,
And yet, in spite of all, the fact
Remains.

Beneath the softly swaying trees
I love to dream about Romance
And eat the various kinds of cheese
From France.

And there was this unblushing rendering into verse in the
New York Times of my ever-recurring necessity for getting
three dollars and getting it quickly:

HUNTING SONG

There's a beautiful check at the end of this verse
I see it three stanzas away,
And bag it I will for the good of my purse
If Luck is my partner today.

How active it is, and how fair to the eye!
All crinkliness, color and grace.
How plainly I see, as it's fluttering by,
The dollars that dimple its face.

I crawl up a stanza—and up the check climbs—
I carefully aim for a bit;
Then quickly I pull a new line, and—it rhymes!—
With a bang! Did I miss? Did I hit?

"I TUNE MY SUPPLE SONG . . ."

To that one—when he accepted it for the *Sunday Times*—Charley Lincoln added an asterisk and the terse announcement: "Sold."

Readers of the *New York Times* were also informed (at a cost of one dollar to Mr. Ochs):

In the Spring, a young man's fancy
Lightly turns to thoughts of love
And in Summer—and in Autumn—and in Winter—
(See above).

Mr. Ochs again having been set back a dollar they received this important admonition:

Whenever you are blue, and need
Some consolation, shout:
"At least I'm not a centipede
Afflicted with the gout!"

As the years passed, my versifying gradually ceased. The huge masses of prose heaped up all around me probably scared away the minor and bashful Muse who had been the source of my lyrical supply. And there was another reason for the triumph of prose over poetry in my life—a reason which I invariably adduced when friends, suffering from an overdose of my prose, used to ask me why I did not throw over unrhymed writing completely and stick exclusively to the lesser evil of rhyme. To such urgings I replied:

"Because I *must* eat something beside breakfast."

Long after prose had closed in on me from all sides, smothering the last attempts of rhyme to surge in my bosom, Penny and Vic decided to rummage in trunks and unearth a lot of my verses for inclusion on a Christmas card which Vic proposed to send to unsuspecting friends. In spite of frenzied objections from me, Penny packed together a lot of my stuff and dashed

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over to Vic's apartment on Washington Square, which she entered, brandishing triumphantly over her head the disintegrated products of my dead days of rhyming.

I had refused to have any part in the scheme. "I may be a poet," I had explained freezingly, "but I'm not a body-snatcher!"

It was no use. Those two ghouls proceeded to sort out and read to each other dozens of my brain-babies—often amid shrieks of disrespect and derision. They were particularly cruel to certain poems dealing with the well-known emotion of love, which (according to me) were highly intellectual satire and (according to them) common-or-garden slop.

"Listen to this one, Penny," Vic would chuckle.

"Listen to this one, Vic," Penny would gurgle.

And all the time I had to sit there, speechless with annoyance, feeling like that Biblical mother whose child got into the clutches of King Solomon. Eventually, Penny and Vic, having tossed aside all that they deemed love-sick piffle, chose a number of my poems for their unhallowed Christmas card—which Vic proceeded to have printed and circulated in spite of my threats of an injunction.

Some of the verses selected had appeared originally in the Times, including the following, dating from an epoch when I was tossing off poems about maritime occurrences of a kind never seen on any sea:

THE PERFECT RACONTEUR

(An Astonishing Incident on the High Seas)

"This tempest's fearful howlin' and this thunder's frightful roar,
Combined with this here boomin' of them breakers on that
shore,

"I TUNE MY SUPPLE SONG . . ."

And taken with yon creakin' of the riggin' in the gale,
Reminds me of a singularly interestin' tale."

Thus spake Dave Snoggles, skipper of the schooner Sally Chubb;
"Cut out the narrative," I urged, "and navigate this tub!"
In vain I spoke—he heard me not—far, far away he glanced,
And (while both masts came crashin' down) he dreamily romanced:

"Twas on a moonlit tropic night, 'way back in '82,
A starlit night"—(just here a wave washed overboard our crew)
"A night of soulful balminess—" "Look out!" I screamed in fright,
"There's rocks ahead"—
"In short," he said,
"It was a lovely night."

"And, as I sat upon the deck, one finger on the wheel—"
(Zip! Zip! I heard a jagged rock tear through the Sally's keel)
"I spied a mermaid swimmin' near—(the Sal here broke in two)—
"A graceful cuss—"
Here both of us
Into the water flew.

"She kissed her hand to me, she did, and wow! but she was trim."
"Forget the mermaid, Dave," I yelled, "and swim, you jackass, swim!"
Then doggedly I kicked and stroked and struggled for my life—
"Said I," Dave gurgled, almost spent: "Dear mermaid, be my wife.

"And she"—(his voice was weakenin')—"and she—she murmured:
'Dave—
'I'"—(here he fouled a floatin' spar and swallowed half a wave)—
"I'm highly flattered, David, and, in answer, I would say—
That'"—(David Snoggles vanished in an avalanche of spray)—

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'I'll be your wife on one condish' "(Dave popped up from the sea)—

" 'And that's' "(he bounded toward the stars in foam-flecked majesty)—

" 'That—that' "(straight toward the depths he sank, whilst upward I was bound)—

" 'That—that' "—"Oh, lord!

That—*WHAT?*" I roared

" 'That—that—' "—here Davy drowned.

And I—alas, they rescued me; would that my aching bones

Had sunk with Davy Snoggles to the lair of Davy Jones!

For, though all day I ask: "That—*what?*" no answer can I find,

And hence I fear

My death is near,

Or—rats!—there goes my mind!

I was glad when those two grave-desecrators included in their thievings the following nostalgic ditty—which, to my mind provided a much-needed touch of semi-seriousness:

TWO OF A KIND

Youth is like a taxicab,

Foe to melancholy,

Very smooth and very fleet,

Tempting us half-way to meet

All the moment's folly.

Tempting us away to whirl,

Deaf to groans of Reason,

Over stretches long indeed,

But so gay with life and speed

That to think is treason.

Ay, youth's like a taxicab,

Only somewhat fleetier.

"I TUNE MY SUPPLE SONG . . ."

Swiftly is its joy-ride past,
Leaving us to stare aghast
At—the taximeter!

After adding that one to their hodgepodge, Penny and Vic promptly proved that they were back at their old stand of irreverence and—as that Harvard professor of my freshman year would have said—of lack of grasp of the spiritual significance of things in general by including the following outburst of mine—dating back to the days when late hours in New York were first getting their claws into me:

ON THE DISCOVERY OF A BRAND-NEW BALD SPOT

Ill-omened vulture that you are,
Grim Baldness! Ha! I feel your wing,
And hear your harbingers all har-
binging!

It makes me weep to note that where
I once possessed a crush, a jam,
A riot of unruly hair,
I am

Quite bald. Ay, bald! Of hair bereft!
Dark turn my features as the night,
While sadly wags my head, right-left,
Left-right.

"Where are the locks of yesterday?
Where are you, capillary mop?
Why do you, faithless, go away,
Oh, crop?"

'Tis thus I sob. I'm quite unmanned,
Disturbed, disgruntled and distraught,

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Disrupted by an awful brand
Of thought,

To wit: how can I longer woo
The Muse?—her whispers hope to catch,
If frequent hands I can't run through
My thatch?

Those two also exhumed and reprinted this:

MISGIVINGS OF A VERY MINOR POET

If I should firmly grasp my pen
And write of robin, lark and wren,

And get into an awful glow
About the rain and wind and snow,

And ladle out a lively wheeze,
To birds and buds and cows and trees

And stars and waves and sobs and sighs
And females with attractive eyes—

In short, if I should try to climb
The well-worn ways of classic rhyme

Like Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron, Keats,
And others in the front row seats,

To history would I go down
Or simply be run out of town?

Besides resuscitating poems which had long since received decent burial in forgotten back numbers of newspapers and magazines, Penny and Vic insisted on including, on their privately circulated Christmas card, verses of mine which, until the

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two of them started rummaging about in my personal verse cemetery, had been known only to a few of my friends. Among them was the following set of verses composed some years before in Moscow—when I was suffering acutely from indigestion brought on by the daily menus of the Hotel Savoy—and mailed home in the teeth of the Bolshevik censor:

RANDOM FLINGS AT RUSSIAN FOOD

(Moscow: At the Sign of the Soda Mint)

The sturgeon is as bad a fish
As any pessimist could wish,
It is so stringy, tough and coarse
It tastes just like a seagoing horse,
And yet the eggs a sturgeon lays
As caviar win the whole world's praise—
Hail, caviar-fiends! Your jaws I bless!
Each egg you eat is one fish less!

I always thought the stuff called spinach
In hall of fame could never win niche,
And yet the Russian has a scheme
Of spinach-taming that's a dream,
He drowns it in a soup which he
Baptizes with the name of "sh-chee"
Wherein, unmercifully stewed,
It barely misses being food.

They say each bullet has its billet—
Well, Russia has some stuff called millet
Each grain of which is billeted
To hit a tum and knock it dead.
You eat a plateful soaked in grease
And presently you rest in peace—
For millet, though, the Russians fall;
Are Russians human, after all?

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Roast mutton, as in Russia known,
Is one-half skin and one-half bone,
With here and there a little bite
As succulent as anthracite.
A Russian mutton chop's a fizzle
Unless you eat it with a chisel.
(The chisel, let me whisper, you
Will find the tend'rer of the two).

But enough of fooling!—These are stern days in which we are living! Here is where I bring this chapter to a close. Robert Wheelwright, doubtless, would press me, if I gave him a chance, to include a certain parody. But I won't—shame on you, Robert! And the reproduction in full of a poem beginning "There was hell to pay in heaven," brazenly fitted to the tune of *The Holy City*, would probably tickle the King brothers, Ned and Dave. But Ned and Dave must remain un-tickled. Let those aforesaid unquoted rhymes—along with a host of others, which, also unquoted here, are at least not unquotable—compose themselves to eternal rest.

Let them sleep under the following epitaph, concocted by Tommy Mett and me as a dedication for one of our numerous never-written masterpieces:

TO OBLIVION,
HEAVENLY MAID,
WHO HAS INVARIABLY CLASPED
TO HER BEAUTIFUL
AND SYMPATHETIC
AND CAPACIOUS
BOSOM
EVERYDAMNTHINGTHATWEEVERWROTE.

Chapter XI

"An Impecunious Party . . ."

ONE day Tommy Mett returned to New York from a visit to his native city of Chicago with a flush of annoyance on his face.

"Out in the West," he informed me, "Arthur Ruhl has been saying that you and I and certain others are members of a charming Bohemian coterie!"

"My God!" I gasped. It is one thing to be a Bohemian and quite another to be called one. I agreed with Tommy Mett that Arthur Ruhl had violated some code or other and should be suppressed if possible. But when we repeated what he was said to have said to various New York friends whose judgment we respected, they muttered, with solemn nods of their heads:

"Arthur is right." (Friends can be very trying. Enemies have their points.)

Now that years have rolled by and hot blood has cooled off and graying hair has brought gentle tolerance, I have come to this conclusion: Arthur Ruhl *was* right. As a matter of fact, that Tommy Mett and I and some of our closest associates should have been classed merely as Bohemians was in a way a compliment—not so much for what it conveyed as for what it didn't. To have some of our actions and attitudes toward higher things during our early New York all lumped together and dismissed in that raffish but undeniably charitable adject-

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tive was after all a break for us. We were somewhat in the position of a man who, having robbed a bank, receives a sentence suggesting that he had stolen a bag of peanuts. I remember distinctly occasions when persons who came into contact with us did *not* call us Bohemians. Bosses, for instance. Creditors, for example. They called us—but, tut-tut—

Of course, there was nothing really wrong with us. Absolutely nothing. We were just heedless young men, loose in a big city. Youth will be served—the trouble is that it insists on being served such reprehensible things. Nevertheless—though I much regret to say so—every one of the members of our “charming Bohemian coterie” managed to have a mighty good time in those days of collective heedlessness. And none of us ever went to jail or was even pinched for talking back to a cop. And that is something, after all, though I don’t know just what.

Our main trouble was chronic insolvency. No matter how much money came into the coterie, much more went out. At times the financial crisis besetting us was so acute that purchasing a bowl of beef stew at Childs’s (price, in that era, 15 cents) was in the same class with squaring the circle. During one of these crises, I sent Freddy Mortimer a poem beginning:

Ha!—an Imp is after me—
Impecuniosity!—

and Freddy responded nobly—with three dollars belonging to Adolph Ochs. Another day, I remember well, Tommy Mert and I and two other prominent ornaments of our Bohemian coterie (they have bribed me not to print their names) went through our pockets to see how much cash we had. The total scored up by the four of us was thirty-two cents—of which

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one individual owned twenty-five cents. He wasn't Tommy Mett, incidentally. Nor Tommy Y.

Chronic impecuniosity did not keep a considerable percentage of the coterie from being ardent enthusiasts of the theater. We knew all sorts of tricks for getting into theaters. Sometimes we would persuade a pecunious friend to stake us to free seats. Then there were the devious ways of journalistic graft (free New York Times tickets now and then perched on my shoulder and cooed in my ear). Occasionally we resorted to drastic and direct methods such as "Bill, lend me two dollars." In fact, we sometimes went even further than that. We paid cash.

At one period Tommy and I were so hard up and at the same time so consumed with love of the drama that we used to play chess after dinner at the Harvard Club, in desperate absorption—until finally one of us would look up from a welter of knights and rooks and pawns and sigh with immense relief: "Too late to see even the third act!" Whereupon we would drop chess like a red-hot potato—neither of us ever had the slightest use or talent for it—and get ready for the next heroic battle against temptation.

But our real dramatic love was grand opera. Thanks to my job on the Times we saw grand operas in numbers which, in view of our finances, were absolutely unbelievable. Off and on during my journalistic career in New York, I reached the proud pinnacle of being on the free list not merely at one opera house but at two.

Soon after my journalistic début, the great Grand Opera War broke out in New York. It was waged furiously by the old-time operatic interests, intrenched at the Metropolitan Opera House, and the invading forces of Oscar Hammerstein,

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dug in at the Manhattan Opera House on West Thirty-Fourth Street.

I did a number of stories for the Times Sunday Magazine on the activities of the warring armies. As a result of this—and of the fact that I was well acquainted with Bill Guard, Hammerstein's famous press representative—I was put "on the door" at both opera houses. That is, Guard and his opposite number at the Metropolitan instructed the ticket collectors at the front portals to let me in free of charge.

When the operatic war ended with the disappearance of Oscar Hammerstein and his singers from the West Thirty-Fourth Street grand opera front, Bill Guard bobbed up at the Metropolitan with the same job that he had held with the Hammerstein rebels. That meant that I was more "on the door" than ever at the Broadway musical citadel. During the opera war and after it I fully availed myself of my privileges. Indeed, I used to boast, in the high tide of my musical enthusiasm, that I had once heard five grand operas on four successive days. When hearers looked skeptical, I airily explained: "Four evening performances and one matinée."

Bill Guard had haggard features and lank hair and piercing eyes, and he always wore a flowing *Vic-de-Bohème* tie. The combination made him one of the leading sights along theatrical Broadway. To be in favor with him did not mean merely the privilege of passing the sentry at the opera house gate—for Bill was one who believed in royal treatment for his friends.

"Coming around tonight?" he would ask me, when we met on the Rialto.

"Yes," I would usually answer.

"Well, look me up when you get in," Bill would add. And

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he would continue on his walk, with his Latin Quarter tie flapping in the breeze and his features trying to decide whether they would compose themselves into a replica of Robert Louis Stevenson or Don Quixote.

At the opera that evening, as soon as I caught sight of Bill, I would detach myself hopefully from the rows of standees and hasten to greet him with exaggerated friendliness.

Bill would go on a little tour of investigation. Then he would beckon to me mysteriously.

"Down there," he would whisper, pointing to a darkened aisle, "there is an empty seat. Take it." And off he would go on matters of high operatic significance, and down the aisle I would go to a seat which would have set me back six dollars had I not enjoyed the favor of that affable liaison officer between the operatic muse and terrestrial small fry.

Soon I got so saturated with operatic music that I deigned to whistle nothing below the rank of *Celeste Aida*. There were times, in fact, when I inflicted on Broadway-in-the-Forties wheezy abominations which I naïvely believed had something in common with the *Ride of the Valkyries* or *Wotan's Farewell*.

In addition to the operatic graft which I enjoyed through Bill Guard, I also used to avail myself of a particular perquisite open to musical fans on the New York Times staff through Richard Aldrich, the paper's renowned musical critic. Richard, as a rule, attended only the opening night of each opera performed during each season; but he invariably received from the Metropolitan management two good orchestra seats for every performance of every opera. These he would generously hand over to other Times men if he were not using them him-

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self—subject, however, to one condition. Everybody who wanted the seats must first write a formal request for them to Richard Aldrich.

When Alexander Woolcott was a cub reporter on the Times, he remarked one day that he wished urgently to see a certain grand opera without expense to himself. One of the veteran musical grafters on the paper—T. R. Ybarra, maybe—explained to Alec the procedure for getting official Times seats. In obedience to the advice he had received, Alec wrote to Richard Aldrich a note which, he afterward declared, was a masterpiece of hesitant, tremulous appeal from one of the lowly to one of the elect. The very next day he opened an envelope addressed to him. Out of it fell the tickets for the two Times seats at the Metropolitan for the evening performance on which he had set his heart, together with this—scribbled across a piece of paper by Richard Aldrich:

"Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix."

One winter Tommy Mett and I were overwhelmed by a crisis of such terrible proportions that to this day he doesn't like to talk about it and shuts me up, if I persist in alluding to it, as if I were guilty of shocking indelicacy and coarseness of soul.

It was Christmas Eve. Both of us, having contributed generously during the preceding weeks toward maintaining New York's high reputation as a center of night life, realized suddenly that our finances were in a perfectly awful state. So Tommy had been compelled to give up the idea of spending Christmas with his folks in Chicago—he didn't want to tell his father exactly what he had done with that last fifty dollars. As for me, I had reluctantly decided against going to Boston

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and living at the expense of Aunt Dora over the Yuletide, owing to the fact that I foresaw difficulty in explaining to her satisfactorily by mail why a trip between New York and Massachusetts (even at its cheapest) had become to me something worthy of the fantastic descriptive powers of Jules Verne. So Tommy and I were staying in Manhattan over Christmas Day.

If we had been wise on the night of December 24th we would have stuck to our typewriters and written something deathless—something, say, worthy of becoming a companion piece to "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." But we were not wise. It became imperative, at about nine P. M., to give New York the once-over. We established the harsh fact that, between us—to last us for days and days—we had four and a half dollars.

Then I had a brainstorm.

"Tommy, listen!" I exclaimed, in a very passable imitation of Demosthenes, "every Christmas since time immemorial I have received from a gentleman in Roxbury, Mass., who was a neighbor of the Ybarras in my childhood, a check for five dollars. Empires may crumble, continents may dissolve, but I'll always get that check as long as that gentleman is extant. At latest advices from Massachusetts he *was* extant. Already I should have received that check, this being Christmas Eve. By no stretch of the imagination can I fail to get it in the Christmas mail tomorrow morning. That will mean for you and me a Christmas Day of affluence and prestige and power. Therefore, what do you say to sallying forth now and spending our joint four-fifty on sociological study in Manhattan?"

"I say we keep seventy-five cents," murmured Tommy.

But I was taking the long, broad view. "Never!" said I, in

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the grand manner. The upshot was that we sallied forth and spent twenty-five cents here (they were often two-for-a-quarter in those days) and fifty-five cents there, and one dollar and ten cents yonder, until the four-fifty looked—as was to be expected—like thirty cents. Then we went to our respective homes.

Next morning (Christmas) Tommy was on the phone.

"Meet me for breakfast at the Greek Restaurant on Forty-Second Street," he said, "and be sure to bring around that five-dollar check."

"It didn't arrive."

There was a stentorian silence.

"God damn!" said Tommy.

"I agree," said I.

There would be no more mail deliveries that day. Both of us knew that lugubrious fact perfectly well. When we met at the Greek Restaurant, we had enough for a single order of Spanish omelet—plus a nickel for the waiter—to tide us over breakfast and lunch. As for dinner, we refused as yet even to think about it. Of course, had we been young men of prudence and foresight and all that sort of thing we could have gone to the Harvard Club and signed for meals of immense scope and nutritious content. But both of us were posted at the Harvard Club.

As that dreadful Christmas Day wore on, Tommy's opinion of me became lower and lower. "Why did you insist on spending that four-fifty?" he inquired acidly at fifteen-minute intervals. Late in the afternoon he left me alone in his room—where I was desperately pounding out mournful verses on a typewriter—and went around to the Harvard Club in the hope of meeting an unposted friend who would sign for some form

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of sustenance. But all un-posted Harvard friends were deep in the bosom of their families, wallowing grossly in Christmas turkey and trimmings—though the whole lot of them, Tommy and I reflected savagely, were far less deserving of such felicity than we were.

At nightfall Tommy was so anti-Ybarra that I began to get alarmed. After all, murder is often sudden. We walked out onto West Forty-Fifth Street, on which his lodging house was situated, in glum unfriendliness.

On the very doorstep we ran into Henry Eliot, about to look us up.

“Merry Christmas!” said Henry.

“What do you mean?” I growled.

“Got any money?” snapped Tommy.

“Ten dollars.”

I think—in fact I’m practically sure of it—that Tommy sat down on the sidewalk and sobbed, while I leaned against a lamp post and talked gibberish to the moon for eight minutes. Then we told Henry all about it.

Henry rose to superhuman heights.

“We’ll have a big beefsteak dinner,” said that twin brother of manna from Heaven, “and then we’ll get standing room at the Metropolitan Opera House.” Owing to silly Anglo-Saxon inhibitions, we didn’t kiss Henry on both cheeks—which is what any Frenchman, particularly a French general, would have done if confronted with such a preview of Paradise. That operatic tidbit dangled before us by Henry was particularly welcome as a Christmas windfall—because at that time I didn’t happen to be “on the door” at any local opera house.

Henry bought us several square feet of steaks. But—Tommy and I couldn’t enjoy them! Just a dinner; that’s all they were

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to us. Henry took us to the opera. But—we couldn't enjoy it! Just a lot of noise; that's all it was to us.

You see, the change in our Christmas fortunes had been too violent. Starving individuals must be fed little by little. Henry should have begun by holding to our lips a glass of milk and asking us wheedlingly: "Come now, you *are* better, aren't you?—you *do* remember your name, don't you?" And then he should have led us gently through a couple of vaudeville skits to a very light light opera. Instead, he pushed at us huge hunks of beefsteak and Richard Wagner. It's a wonder he didn't kill us!

Incidentally, the impecuniosity from which I often suffered in those days brought me such nightmares of recollection in after years that I resolved never to suffer from it any more. In fact, I made a slogan for myself: *Freedom, Solvency, Excitement*. And I swore, with hand upraised in the general direction of the firmament, to abide by that slogan.

Please note the modesty of its second section. I did not ask for *wealth*; I merely asked for *solvency*. The idea that I could ever be rich never entered my head. But the thought that I might even once again be forced to limit breakfast-plus-lunch to half an order of Spanish omelet at a Greek restaurant in an American city terrified me. I solemnly made up my mind that henceforth breakfast-plus-lunch should never consist of less than *one full portion* of Spanish omelet.

I admire that slogan of mine. It has something. It really has. Friends admire it also. In fact, Olin Downes admires it so much that he once bought me a good dinner at a French restaurant in Manhattan just on the strength of it. But I don't like the twist given to it by Fitz Minnigerode. When I was about to take a highly important step, Fitz remarked: "Boy, you're going

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to have no freedom at all and no solvency at all but you're going to have a hell of a lot of excitement!”

In looking over this chapter, I get the impression that it is still another instance of an ailment which has beset me ever since I was old enough to have measles or mumps: inability to join the overwhelming majority of the human race in looking solemnly at practically everything. “We laugh too soon,” Tommy Mett and I used to tell each other, in seeking reasons why we had never been asked to join the board of directors of anything whatsoever.

In my defense I wish to state that my ailment, as I see it, is not so much a tendency to take lightly what ought to be taken seriously as a refusal to take seriously what ought to be taken lightly. No matter how it may be diagnosed, it has given me a great deal of trouble—and an enormous amount of satisfaction.

I cannot truthfully say that I would rather reap the gains which accrue in this world to those who are primarily reverent than suffer the setbacks inflicted on those who are primarily irreverent. Even at times when I have sinned most grievously by laughing in the wrong place, I have consoled myself by remembering that I have functioned for entire years on jobs which anybody hopelessly enslaved to a sense of humor could not have held down for a single week. In other words, I solace myself by recalling that members of that vast, influential, and unsmiling organization, the United-Association-of-Life-Is-Real-Life-Is-Earnest, have decided on several important occasions to entrust me with work presupposing real seriousness of outlook.

As a matter of fact, I have always admired enormously

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Coventry Patmore's remark that Spanish literature "combines gravity of matter with gaiety of manner." And I try to forget slurs on what others deem my levity by trying to convince myself that I am following in the footsteps of Spanish literary forefathers.

Nevertheless, there are times when I get so depressed at my incapacity for taking most people and things seriously that I wish I might have my sense of humor extracted and placed in a glass case at a Chamber of Horrors. But I soon grow cheerful again when I think about a certain sardonic and unimpressible journalistic colleague of mine.

He is awed in this world by practically nothing. He chuckles at practically everything. One day, in the Europe of the pre-Hitler era, where we were both acting as correspondents for American newspapers, he walked in on a gathering of American special writers of a particularly solemn type.

The most casual glance at them was enough to show that they believed themselves to be the terrestrial headquarters of history-in-the-making. Their brows were creased. Their cheeks were haggard. All of them gave the distinct impression that fate had just dumped this distressful world of ours across their shoulders and gone away without leaving a forwarding address.

My friend eyed them sardonically.

"What a bunch!" he grunted. "As usual! Pinch-hitting for Atlas!"

Chapter XII

"Prime Ministers and Such As They . . ."

I WAS in Berlin. I was stationed there as regular correspondent for the New York Times. Berlin in those days was a better place than it is now. Adolf Hitler was in jail.

Late spring turned into early summer, June into July, warm weather into hot weather—but the rush of work was such that I couldn't break away even for a short rest. So I evolved a magnificent plan for getting sea air and salt water bathing without officially departing from Berlin. Filled with elation, I invited Dorothy Thompson to lunch at the Esplanade and unfolded my plan to her thus:

"As a rule, you know, working hours for an American correspondent here run roughly from three in the afternoon until midnight. Well, I propose to leave Berlin every night after my last dispatch is written—say, at one A. M. In three hours I'll be in Stettin. There I'll get a room at a hotel and sleep until, say, eight in the morning—four hours of sleep are enough for anybody. Then I'll take another train, reach the shore of the Baltic at Swinemünde in an hour—at nine in the morning—disport myself in the surf until ten, dress, get a snack of food, board a train for Berlin at eleven A. M., and be back on the job—bounding with health, suffused with a rosy glow!—at three in the afternoon! Then, at one A. M.—back to the Baltic! What do you think of my plan?"

Dorothy eyed me thoughtfully.

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"And yet," she said, in a dreamy tone of voice, "they call women the romantic sex!"

I tell that little story for two reasons: first, to show that writing from Europe for a New York newspaper tends to loosen one's grasp on realities and possibilities; and, second, to stress the point that Berlin is like the luckless predecessor of Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor—nothing becomes it in life like the leaving of it.

At best—that is, with Hitler in jail—Berlin is not a likable city. Berlin has never been to Germany—Imperial, Republican, or Nazi—what London is to England or Paris to France.

London is England in miniature. Paris is France in miniature. Both have absorbed into themselves all that is essentially English or French; both have given it out again in a form that is pure England in one case and pure France in the other. No big English city can hold up its head in competition with London; no big French city can stand as a rival beside Paris. Naturally, when a foreigner is in England or France, he wants to know typical small cities and venerable towns and charming villages; he wants to drink in the loveliness of the countryside. But, after knowing London, who wants to know Liverpool or Manchester, Sheffield or Leeds? After hearing the voice of Paris, who wants to hear the voice of Bordeaux or Lille, Marseilles or Nantes?

London is the heart and soul of England. Paris is the heart and soul of France. Berlin is the center of Germany. But Berlin is not the heart of Germany. Berlin is the crossroads of Germany. But Berlin is not the soul of Germany. There is far more in Dresden and Munich and Stuttgart and Hamburg than there is in Berlin. Berlin is like a colossal robot going through the motions of a normal German. But Berlin is not normal Ger-

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many. Berlin is the epitome of Prussia, if you will—but not the epitome of Germany. We foreigners living within Berlin's vast municipal area had a curious feeling at times that we weren't in Germany at all.

Shortly before I became Berlin correspondent of the New York Times, inflation had produced catastrophe in the Germany of the era following the First World War. But to one German that catastrophe had brought, instead of ruin, wealth and prestige. Already a man with millions of marks in his pockets, he was able through the collapse of German finance to amass millions more, together with power that seemed unlimited and the prospect of still more riches and power if his genius could effect the transfer of his industrial empire from a desperately ill to a slowly recovering Reich.

That man was Hugo Stinnes. He was the King of Inflation. When I reached Berlin, he was trying hard to effect that transfer. He died before he could do it—and the heirs to his dozens of factories and acres of real estate and blocks of stock certificates went down to ruin in the years after his death like so many thousands of their fellow-Germans in the years which had brought gold and greatness to Hugo Stinnes.

When I started cabling dispatches to New York about the German Republic, Stinnes was still playing a leading rôle. He was a shambling, stuffy, inconspicuous little man. Usually badly dressed, he went around deep in thought about financial problems, the intricate details of which existed only in his brain—which was one reason why his successors failed to hold together the financial empire that he had built up.

Stories about Stinnes were all over Berlin. One dealt with his arrival late one night at the most exclusive hotel in fashionable Baden-Baden.

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"I want a room," he told the clerk.

That haughty individual eyed him coldly. Stinnes, as usual, looked like a tramp.

"Not a room vacant!" snapped the clerk.

"Well, you'll probably have one later," mumbled Stinnes, quite unruffled. And he took a seat in a far corner of the lobby and got out some rumpled paper and a stubby pencil and plunged into calculations which doubtless involved whole districts of the Ruhr.

The manager of the hotel strolled into the front office. The clerk pointed out the man in the far corner.

"That guy wanted a room," he said. "The nerve of him!"

"*What's that?*"

"Why—who is he?"

"Don't you know? Good heavens, *don't you know?* He's Hugo Stinnes. He owns most of Germany—including this hotel!" The clerk, utterly crushed, started to apologize. But the manager was already by the side of Stinnes. He bowed abjectly.

"Please pardon the slight delay. It was unavoidable. Allow me to show you to our best suite of rooms. If only you will forgive. . . ."

"Oh, that's all right," mumbled the owner of the hotel and of most of Germany, still scribbling figures on his sheet of rumpled paper. "Just have my bag taken up. I'll come along in a minute. Please don't worry. Don't mention it. Thank you."

One day Hugo Stinnes was at the Hotel Adlon in Berlin. He came shuffling down the big marble stairway leading from the first floor to the main lobby. A prominent American special correspondent spied him. Taking a long chance, he walked straight up to the financial czar of the German Republic, introduced himself—wondering whether he would be abruptly

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told to go about his business—and obtained a first-class interview.

That correspondent was very proud of his interview. He lost no opportunity to tell other correspondents—and members of the human race in general—all about it. After a while, people began to fade away into the background whenever the proud interviewer of Stinnes approached.

As one individual put it:

“The first five times you’re told about that interview are the easiest.”

One newspaper writer actually classed his adventures, in trying to avoid being told about it, with this classic of American journalism:

A famous New York old-time journalist once succeeded in the extremely difficult task of getting an interview with the Pope. That papal interview almost unsettled his mind. He decided to devote the rest of his life to waylaying other journalists and telling them about it at immense length.

But there was one journalist who went into the middle of a big field on a night of inky darkness and raised his hand toward the heavens and swore a dreadful oath that he would never be told that story about that papal interview.

For years he kept his word. Again and again—sometimes in the teeth of seemingly insuperable obstacles—he eluded the man who had talked with the Pope. Undismayed by repeated failures, the interviewer settled down to stalking his chosen victim. It became a grim man-hunt. The interviewer lay in wait behind doors, popped up suddenly out of bushes. In vain! The other invariably made a spectacular getaway. The entire United States (I gathered from the journalist who told me the story) looked on, in hypnotized fascination.

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Finally, one summer day, the Man-Who-Wouldn't-Be-Told was having a swim in the Atlantic off Manhattan Beach. Suddenly his face turned pale. Only a short distance away, swimming lustily—*between him and the shore*—was the man who had interviewed the Pope.

"Delighted to see you," puffed the interviewer.

As he came alongside—still between the other man and the United States—he sputtered, clearing his mouth of salt water: "You remind me, somehow, of the time I interviewed the Pope. You see, it was this way. . . ."

"And there was nothing for me to do," the victim reported when he told the story afterward, "but listen to that damned fool or swim to Europe!"

Guido, one of the American correspondents in pre-Hitler Berlin, used to fade away into the background when threatened with a résumé of the great Stinnes interview. For he knew Stinnes well and had talked with him a number of times—so the correspondent of the adventure of the Adlon stairway could tell him nothing he didn't know already about the King of Inflation.

Gudio used to tell, in the hope of being believed some day by somebody, of an experience which (he alleged) had come to him in the days when Stinnes' financial realm was in its heyday:

A certain Teutonic bigwig had just died. The Associated Press, on whose Berlin staff Guido was then working, assigned him to cover the funeral.

"So I went over to a nail on the wall," he used to tell us, "on which the official Associated Press funeral outfit was hanging—black coat with a black band on one sleeve, black trousers, black gloves, and the tallest and blackest high hat in the world.

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I put on these togs and went to the funeral. I attracted more attention than the corpse. Nobody had ever seen such a tall hat. It made everybody gape and stare and goggle. Presently Hugo Stinnes came along. He took one look at that towering headpiece of mine and exclaimed: 'There's one chimney I don't own!'

Though the corps of American correspondents in Berlin worked for papers that were officially rivals, we now and then co-operated with each other on the old you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours theory.

One day Joe Shaplen, who was Berlin correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune, in talking about a story which he had just picked up at the German Foreign Office around the corner on the Wilhelmstrasse, said a very witty thing. What it was I have forgotten—which is also true of the political situation that inspired it.

"Of course, you'll use that to lead off your story when you cable it?" said I.

But Joe, suddenly taken cautious, shook his head.

"No, Tommy," he demurred. "My paper is a serious sheet. That joke is too flippant for it."

In those days the Adlon Bar used to sell small caviar sandwiches. The price of these (because of their extraordinary smallness) was within the reach of us newspapermen. Joe Shaplen thought highly of them. So did I.

"Joe," I said to him, "if you aren't going to use that line of yours, I want it for a dispatch I'm about to send to the New York Times. Will you let me use it in the Times if I buy you two caviar sandwiches?"

"Done!" said Joe!

I got the sandwiches. Joe ate them with much gusto.

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Then he began to think over our little business transaction. My purchase of caviar—and my enthusiasm for his quip—had made him suspect that what he had said must be pretty good.

"Tom, am I still at liberty to use that joke in the Herald Tribune?" he asked.

"Of course you are," said I. "I merely bought the Times Square rights."

So both Joe and I cabled it to our respective papers. A week or so later we got copies of the Herald Tribune and the Times. My paper had printed Joe's witticism. Joe's paper had thrown it into the wastebasket.

In the Reichstag we used to watch Hans Luther, Premier of the German Republic, and Gustav Stresemann, that republic's ex-Premier and dynamic Foreign Minister, fight their losing fight to keep the foredoomed German Republic of the years after the First World War from going under. That republic was foredoomed because practically nobody inside or outside the Reich had any real use for it. Already the forces afterwards welded together in destructive union by Adolf Hitler were ominously gathering for the purpose of tearing it to pieces.

Out of business hours we used to hobnob pleasantly with Premier Luther and other German statesmen of the moment at afternoon parties in the beautiful grounds behind one of the palaces on the Wilhelmstrasse turned over to the German Foreign Office. Herr Luther had a sense of humor. At one of these garden parties, commenting on his record in the years before he had been pitchforked into the hectic political life of republican Germany, he told us: "Ludwig Thoma, the Bavarian humorist, once described a certain man thus: 'He was a lawyer
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and also otherwise of mediocre intellect.’ Well, that describes me too.”

On another occasion, when he was again chatting with us foreign journalists in that same pleasant garden, Premier Luther suddenly remarked:

“I like China. Gentlemen, I am extremely fond of China. China, I think, is a great and noble nation. Yes, I like China. . . .”

We were all much mystified by this sudden ode in praise of the Celestial Realm. Finally, one of us cut it short by asking Herr Luther the reason for his enthusiasm. With a solemn expression on his features, he replied:

“This morning I received a note of protest from France about something done by my government. I got one also from Belgium. I received another from Poland. And a fourth came from Italy. From China, however, I received no note of protest. China is a great nation. I like China.”

Again and again those who attended the Foreign Office parties entered the gardens in expectation of finding Marshal Von Hindenburg, President of the German Republic, installed under one of the big trees. But Old Granite Face never showed up. He knew no foreign language, and he didn’t think much of sociability anyhow. He was particularly against it when it was connected with having to be polite to foreign correspondents stationed in Berlin and to casual correspondents on a visit there.

Not that we could have written stories about Hindenburg if he *had* put in an appearance—it was expressly understood that nothing said by statesmen of the German Republic under the trees and among the flower beds of the Foreign Office grounds was to be transmitted to our newspapers. But it would

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have helped the local color of our dispatches if Old Granite Face had let us get a close-up of his dour countenance. Already, however, he was a tired and cross old soldier—not, however, so old as to be in that state resembling senility into which he fell a few years later, when Adolf Hitler and his Brown Shirts were preparing to take over Germany and dish out catastrophe to the universe.

When I returned to Berlin, just after Hitler had been summoned by the aged Field Marshal and invested with the premiership of Germany, people in Berlin were passing around this quip:

Hindenburg and Hitler were standing together on the balcony of the presidential palace on the Wilhelmstrasse, on the night after Hitler's accession to the premiership. Below them, packing the street from curb to curb, were tens of thousands and more tens of thousands of brown-shirted Nazis, streaming past in a mammoth torchlight procession that seemed as if it would never end. The old Field Marshal, eighty-six years old—who, a score of years before, had given and taken tremendous blows in battles along the eastern front of the First World War—turned, in bewilderment, to Hitler (so ran the Berlin story) and said:

"But I didn't know we had captured so many Russians!"

Not long after that Hindenburg was dead. From black clouds, massing over the international landscape, war leered in hungry anticipation. And we who had been able to snatch amusement here and there—even while we cabled our dispatches and typed our articles presaging disaster—looked back with envy on days when fleeting interludes of laughter had been possible.

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We Berlin correspondents all attended Hindenburg's inauguration as President in the big hall of the Reichstag. Just after taking the oath of office he reviewed an honor company of the regular German army, drawn up outside the building. The foreign press followed the President out of the Reichstag, and we grouped ourselves, while the old Field Marshal reviewed the soldiers, at the top of the big outside stairway of the Reichstag, from where we had an excellent view of the proceedings.

Hindenburg strode along the front of the company, as erect as if he were a young lieutenant instead of a venerable field marshal. He stopped suddenly in front of one private. He glared. He said something. The private stood like a statue, eyes gazing straight ahead, without stirring a muscle. Then the grim old President moved on.

“I know what Hindenburg said to that guy,” whispered Lincoln Eyre, who was standing beside me.

“What?”

“‘This morning you didn't wash behind your ears!’”

During Hindenburg's term as President of the German Republic, some observers of international affairs thought him the only man who could possibly save the tempest-tossed German ship of state. Unless the old warrior got a second term, they reasoned, Germany would be wrecked. One of these observers, when he buttonholed Guido one day, was positively wringing his hands from worry.

“What *will* the Germans do if Hindenburg dies?” he wailed.

“Stuff him and run him again!” said Guido.

When I was stationed in Berlin, you couldn't lose Hj Schacht. Wherever you went, you ran across the

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renowned financial juggler. Everywhere you heard tales of his ability and audacity and peppery temper. Schacht, it seems to me, emerges in clearest outline from this story:

He was asked by a young hero-worshipper to write something in an autograph album and sign thereto his celebrated name. Glancing over the pages of the album, he came to the name of Gustav Stresemann. To express his philosophy of life, Stresemann had selected a sentence from one of Goethe's tragedies, which painted the heroes of history as helpless puppets, irresistibly swept along in Fate's chariot despite their frantic attempts to control its course.

Schacht's lips curled contemptuously. He shook his head in emphatic dissent. After a moment's thought, he wrote, under Stresemann's contribution, a few lines of impromptu verse. Here is a free translation:

"Give *me* the man of courage stout,
Who *steers* the chariot of Fate,
And whirls it to the right-about
Him only will I hail as great!"

That expresses Hjalmar Schacht in a nutshell.

His self-confidence had brought him eminent position—and a whole lot of trouble. Like other régimes in Germany, the Nazis utilized him—years after he had been utilized by the German Republic. But soon he was at outs with Hitler—as he had been, sooner or later, with almost every boss who had employed him. Schacht is reported to have told Hitler, in the course of a discussion: "You'll need me for two or three years. After that, you can shoot me if you want to. But you can't shoot me yet."

Now they are at loggerheads. But Schacht hasn't been shot. Hitler simply doesn't dare get rid of him. A crisis may come, the Nazi dictator knows, when Schacht's financial genius will

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again be needed. So Schacht sulks—and Hitler fumes—and no firing squad is sent around to liquidate the man whom contemporaries in other countries have called the ablest and most unscrupulous financial wizard in Europe.

In the days of the German Republic several correspondents of American newspapers went to see Dr. Schacht at the Reichsbank, of which he was president. One was Dorothy Thompson. Another was Guido. Another was myself.

We were ushered into a very stately room, over-decorated in the Prussian style of the seventies of last century. A Prussian flunkey in grand blue-and-red livery, who obviously took the world in general and the Reichsbank in particular with portentous seriousness, conveyed our cards to Schacht, who was in an inner sanctum. We sat down at a big table. We felt like a directors' meeting.

Schacht came in. He gave some perfectly ordinary answers to our questions. Then, suddenly, he lost his temper—as was his habit. With blazing eyes, he shouted:

"If the Allied nations continue on their course, they won't get one pfennig more of reparations!"

The bunch of us sat up with a bang. Front-page stuff! But Schacht, having cooled off, curtly told us that he wouldn't allow us to print what he had just said—an old custom among celebrities who lose their tempers while being interviewed.

But eloquent and almost tearful appeals from us mollified him. He suggested a compromise.

"Write out a single version of what you think I said," he told us. "If I approve, you can cable it. If I don't, you can't. When you are ready, ring for the attendant." And he vanished into his inner sanctum.

Each of us wrote out our idea of what Schacht had said dur-

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ing his explosion. Dorothy's version was adjudged the best. Then we called that pompous Prussian attendant in the colorful livery.

He re-entered the room with a mien suggesting that he was carrying the German Reich piggy-back.

This was simply too much for Guido. In tones such as one would use in a beer-cellar to a waiter, he said to that pompous Prussian:

"Three light and four dark!"

That Prussian missed sudden death by a hair. So, I suspect, did Guido—judging from the Prussian's eyes. Dorothy Thompson saved the flunkey from apoplexy and Guido from assassination by requesting the Prussian to go and fetch Dr. Schacht. The Prussian staggered out of the room.

Dr. Schacht reappeared. He read Dorothy's production. He graciously gave his permission to the lot of us to put it on the wire.

I have forgotten completely what it was about. But I shall never forget that Prussian flunkey's face when Guido, surrounded by the heavy, over-ornate impressiveness of the great German Reichsbank, impudently gave that beer-cellar order. I don't know to this minute why the heavy Prussian ceiling over our heads didn't collapse from shock and bury Guido and the rest of us under its ruins.

Important Americans in Berlin were to Guido a prime source of inspiration for wisecracks.

Once Gates W. McGarrah, first-run Wall Street magnate, came to give the German capital the once-over. He got the idea that it would be well to talk not only with local bankers and diplomats and political leaders but also with American newspaper correspondents. It was decided in solemn conference at

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the United States Embassy that McGarrah should have the privilege of talking first to the New York Times (T. R. Ybarra) and then to the Associated Press (Guido).

I was forthwith invited to lunch with the visitor from Wall Street. I discoursed sagely about Germany's past, present, and future—without visibly impressing Gates McGarrah at any point.

Then Guido got a subpoena to lunch. Over a couple of big cigars, McGarrah asked him what he thought of the future prospects of a certain nation of eastern Europe then very much in the limelight.

"That nation," announced Guido, gravely puffing out expensive smoke, "can never have a favorable trade balance."

"Why not?" eagerly asked the banker from New York, edging his chair closer. He was on the verge, he felt, of learning a big financial truth about eastern Europe.

"Because," explained Guido, "it has nothing to export but goose-feathers, and it has to import insect powder."

Then Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes came to town. He was scheduled to arrive very early in the morning at the Friedrichstrasse railroad station in Berlin. The entire staff of the United States Embassy, in most awe-inspiring ceremonial garb, was drawn up on the station platform to greet their boss. Ambassador Alanson Houghton was there, with an even more expensive orchid than usual in his buttonhole. Warren Delano Robbins was there, wearing an extremely glossy silk hat. And First Secretary This was there in all his glory; and Second Secretary That, looking like a lily of the field. And every one of them was yawning and rubbing his eyes and cursing Charles Evans Hughes for choosing as the time for his matutinal arrival the obscene hour of seven.

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Just before Hughes' train pulled in, Guido appeared. He marched along the row of haggard, sleepy American diplomats like a general reviewing troops. Pausing in front of Ambassador Houghton, he said: "First real day's work you fellows have done in years, isn't it?"

Then Owen D. Young visited us. Those were the days of the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan and other noble experiments. Summoning a batch of resident American correspondents to his suite at the Adlon, Owen Young said to us something like this:

"Gentlemen, it will interest you to know that the German government has begun officially to pay its bill for reparations. I have just received from Germany's Minister of Finance a check on account for five million dollars. I have that check in my pocket."

There was a dramatic silence. Then Guido piped up:

"Mr. Young, some of us newspapermen are meeting tonight at this hotel in a poker game. Won't you join us?"

The American and other foreign correspondents residing in Germany's metropolis between the First and Second World Wars were a small island of lonesome foreigners in a sea of native Teutons. This was far from being as true of pre-Hitler Berlin as it became of Berlin under Hitler. But it was true just the same.

One seemed to hear, even in those pre-Hitler days, the lapping of the waves of hostility. In justice to the people of the pre-Hitler German Republic, I must record that most of them were friendly enough and polite enough to us foreigners. But it was easy to see that their friendliness was largely due to natural fatigue after years of wartime hating; that their polite-

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ness was a pause for breath before their entry into similar years, already casting dark shadows over the Berlin of Stresemann and the Germany of Weimar and the Europe of Versailles.

That sort of thing brought close union to foreign correspondents in Berlin. We constantly felt the craving to get together.

The Hotel Adlon became our club. In the Adlon lobby we met and gossiped and exchanged news. In the Adlon Bar we rolled dice for drinks—Beach Conger and Charley Smith and Douglas Miller and Joe Shaplen and Hubert Knickerbocker and T. R. Ybarra.

When I was first in Berlin, I recall, Dorothy Thompson and Sigrid Schultz wouldn't come into the Adlon Bar—they stayed, in lady-like aloofness, in the lobby or restaurant. Later they relented; but Sigrid never ordered anything but a Schultz cocktail. She wouldn't tell me what it was. I asked Fred, the barman.

"Das ist ein Geheimnis!" he answered.

I asked Franz, another barman.

"Dat iss a secret!" he replied.

Finally Sigrid herself told me. A Schultz cocktail was composed of equal parts of orange juice, orange juice, and orange juice.

The Adlon Bar has been maligned. In the years immediately following the First World War, it certainly deserved the lurid reputation which came to it. In that era it served as a rendezvous for certain foreigners, correspondents and others, whose pockets had been filled by inflation and kindred plagues with enough German marks to assuage even thirsts of the titanic proportions of those raging within their bosoms. The Adlon of those brief days was remarkable even in the Europe of the early 1920's, when the masterly quenching of American and other

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thirsts with German and other beverages reached an all-time high.

The Adlon Bar of those wild days is epitomized for me by what was at one time a regular occurrence there.

One of the Adlon bartenders was called Fix. In Germany one often hears the expression *fix und fertig* (meaning, roughly, fit and ready)—likewise one is frequently told, *Er ist fertig*, meaning "He's through!"—with anything but a complimentary implication for the person involved. Night after night an American friend of an American who operated one of the most grandiose thirsts in the world used to shout to that bartender:

"Fix!"

Then he would point to the thirsty one, sprawled in profound sleep across a couple of chairs, as a result of twenty or thirty libations.

"Fertig!" that friend would add. Whereupon Fix, assisted by whatever reinforcements he could muster, would lift the sprawling form from its uncomfortable couch, propel it to the service elevator behind the bar, and shoot it toward the upper floors of the Adlon Hotel, on one of which it lived. Then all hands would resume drinking. It was doubtless highly interesting from a sociological point of view—the relaxation of morals following a tremendous war, the breakdown of inhibitions after four years of wholesale international throat-slitting, etc., etc.—all that sort of thing—but it was *not* inspiring.

After that short booze-saturated era, however, in the wake of the First World War, the Adlon Bar became an entirely different place, undeserving of severe censure—and, incidentally, even in its most booze-saturated period, those who forgot how to behave within its narrow walls were largely Americans, so

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their fellow-citizens ought to be lenient in handing out criticism of the place.

In the pre-Hitler years when I really knew it, the Adlon Bar was less a German drink dispensary than an American-English club. In the cramped space within its walls, American newspaper correspondents met members of the United States Embassy staff and American casual visitors to Berlin. The first act of many a special traveling correspondent—and many another roving American writer—following his arrival at the Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse or the Anhalter Bahnhof—was to hasten to the Adlon and wait for some resident American or some other American casual to turn up and provide copy for an article in process of gestation for the Saturday Evening Post or Collier's or the Cosmopolitan—or simply wait in order to consume drinks in English-speaking company.

One morning, I remember, a tall American of florid complexion came into the Adlon Bar. He looked about him in a friendly way. He was so obviously American and so obviously friendly that presently three or four of the Adlon Club members were gathered around him.

"I'm Sinclair Lewis," he announced. "Anybody seen Tom Ybarra lately?"

"Present!" said a voice at the speaker's right elbow—my voice.

That was typical of the Adlon Bar. To the Americans of Berlin, it was restaurant and marketplace; clearing-house and gossip-chamber; source of news and cure for loneliness; bank and café and club.

As I said, the Adlon Bar has been maligned. In maligning it (to paraphrase Winston Churchill's celebrated words) seldom have so few harmed so many so much.

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To the Adlon Bar! That toast, I know well, will be drunk with alacrity by many Americans who were residents of the Berlin of the 1920's—and with a touch of sadness at the thought of what has happened in later years to Berlin and the rest of the world.

In spite of everything we foreigners managed to have a pretty good time in pre-Hitler Berlin. The latent and growing hostility around us pushed us closer together and made us better acquainted with each other. It made us more inclined to minimize defects and magnify virtues. If you meet somebody every day, often more than once a day, and both of you discover after you have parted that you look forward to the next meeting—no matter how violently you may have disagreed on some subject or how big the other fellow's shortcomings looked during the disagreement—then both of you are well along the road to a new friendship.

In other European centers of news of those years—most particularly Paris—centrifugal forces were constantly at work in the American journalistic colony. The lure of the City of Light played ducks and drakes with American solidarity. There were so many different phases of Paris to taste and savor and digest—so much that was glamorous and exciting and beautiful to fit into one's conceptions of life—that the centripetal force of mere meetings with other Americans was constantly weakened. If repeated association with some other American in Paris made you think that you felt dislike for him, there was nothing resembling the latent hostility of Berlin to palliate that dislike.

Paris always smiled in those days. Paris smiled at Americans of the period after the First World War with her lips and with her eyes. Berlin, war-weary Berlin, also smiled—but most of

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the smiles bestowed by her on us foreigners were mere mechanical motions of her lips.

From 1926 onward I was no longer stationed in Berlin. But I visited the German capital many times. Each visit made me sense a change. And each change was for the worse.

The power of the Nazis was mounting steadily. Hitler's harangues were growing steadily more truculent. Militaristic preparations were to be seen or guessed at on every side. No matter how hard one tried to relegate rumors of secret air-dromes and secret armaments to the domain of surmise, one felt instinctively that most of those rumors were true. The bluest of skies seemed about to be hidden by storm clouds; the sunniest of weather seemed on the point of being swept away by chill winds; the very air smelled of war.

Chapter XIII

"He Never Would Be Missed . . ."

I HAVE talked twice with Adolf Hitler.

The first time was in the famous Brown House in Munich. That was shortly before he had made himself master of Germany. He was then merely the head of the Brown Shirts. But already he and they were developing into a serious menace to the German Republic and to the peace of the world because of their steadily growing audacity and activity.

The second time was in the chancellery on the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin.

In the interval between the two talks, the Brown Shirt chieftain rose to dictatorial power at the expense of all parties in the Reich except his own Nazis and of everything there that remotely resembled open opposition to his arrogant will. When I met him for the second time, he had already embarked on his initial preparations for welding Germany into that militarized, mechanized instrument of aggression which was destined to push Europe and the rest of the world to the very brink of fatal catastrophe.

In Munich I was taken to see Hitler by "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, that eccentric product of Bavaria and Boston and Harvard, whom I had known years before in the United States. Putzi, in the meantime, had become one of the most super-rabid of super-Nazis. It was in the Hanfstaengl home on the banks of the Staffelsee in Southern Bavaria that Hitler was captured after he

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and Ludendorff had failed in their attempt to seize power in Germany in the autumn of 1923.

After Hitler had transformed himself into the dictator of the Nazi Reich he had made Hanfstaengl a sort of court jester and confidential pianist. In the middle of the night Putzi would suddenly be routed out of bed by the ringing of his phone bell. He would rush, like a ghost in pajamas, to take the call. At the other end of the wire he would hear the impatient voice of Adolf Hitler.

"I am nervous," the voice would say. "Come right over to play the piano for me." So the ghost in pajamas would put on more conventional clothes and dash off to the chancellery.

"Play Wagner!" its Fuehrer would command. Then, after Hanfstaengl had played the Fire Music, or the Ride of the Valkyries, or the Rhine Journey: "Play more Wagner!" Sometimes Putzi wouldn't get back into bed until dawn.

Some four years ago he fell into disfavor. He was forced to run away, in fear of assassination, first to Switzerland and later to England. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War he was caught in the latter country by the war. The British promptly interned him and left him to meditate in prison on the ups and downs which beset not only the Fuehrers of this unstable world but also their confidential piano thumpers.

When I appeared in Munich, however, Putzi was on the crest of the wave, high in favor with his temperamental boss. So it was to Putzi that I presented my request for aid in obtaining an interview with Hitler for Collier's Weekly.

My reception by Hanfstaengl was typical. A maid, who had opened the door for me, shouted my name through the keyhole of a bathroom from which came the sound of much soaping and

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splashing. Then she disappeared in the direction of the Hanfstaengl kitchen. In another moment the bathroom door was flung open and Putzi, stark naked, came leaping toward me.

"You will have breakfast with me?" he shouted. Ignoring my reply—adroitly wedged in between two torrents of words from him, partly English, partly German—that I had already breakfasted at the Vier Jahreszeiten Hotel, he wrapped himself in a bath towel and led me to the dining room.

There I unfolded to him my desire to propel an interview with Hitler into the pages of Collier's. Putzi sat in silence, buttering a roll.

I pointed out to him that the publication of the Hitler interview which I had in mind would bring a big audience to Adolf, profit to Collier's, and kudos to me. Still he sat in silence, spreading brown sugar over that buttered roll.

Having said my say—forcefully, I hoped, and in practical, business-like language—I stopped and looked expectantly at Putzi.

"Eat this!" he ordered. And he pushed into my hand the heavily sugared, thickly buttered roll.

I said my say all over again. Again I waited expectantly.

"Oh, it's good to see you!" exclaimed Putzi, beaming on me. "Shall I fix up another roll for you?" He reached for bread, butter, and brown sugar.

Eventually—some time before noon—we got down to business. Putzi agreed to help me to see Hitler.

He tried hard to impress me with what he considered the tremendous honor that was in store for me. He kept me kicking my heels most of the afternoon close to the telephone at the Vier Jahreszeiten, while (he assured me) he was doing all sorts of subtle spade work in preparation for the interview. Every

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little while he would call up and say, in deep, solemn tones: “Soon the Fuehrer will see you. Be patient. I am arranging everything.”

Finally, about seven that evening, in a voice filled with awed reverence, Hanfstaengl murmured over the phone:

“I have succeeded. Come, without losing a single minute, to the Brown House. Der Fuehrer (here his voice dropped almost into his boots) has consented to see you.”

I taxied over to the Brown House. There I was met by Putzi. On his face was a look of immense solemnity.

In a small office near Hitler’s sanctum Hanfstaengl and I prepared a list of numbered questions for the interview—Adolf, he informed me, liked them that way. After half an hour or so the two of us were summoned into the Fuehrer’s sanctum.

Hitler was dressed in the regulation Nazi uniform—brown shirt, belt stretching from shoulder to hip, black trousers stuffed into the top of a pair of riding boots.

He came out from behind a desk, fingering his Charlie Chaplin moustache. He gave Putzi the straight-arm Nazi salute. Then he shook hands with me in the ordinary way. On his desk, I noticed, was a bust of Mussolini. On a near-by shelf stood a bust of Frederick the Great. Behind the desk was a large figure, sculptured in marble, of an acutely uncomfortable individual—supposedly representing pre-Nazi Germany waiting to be liberated by Adolf Hitler.

Adolf didn’t think much of the questions framed so carefully by Putzi and me. He looked them over superciliously.

“I will *not* answer Question Number Two,” he announced. “I *will* answer Number Three and Number Seven together. I will *not* answer Number Five.” And so on. Putzi squirmed in his chair. He had been very proud of his part in those ques-

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tions—and he had given me the impression that Adolf would simply eat them up.

Well, anyhow, Hitler answered *some* of them—eloquently. He brought out his regular bag of tricks. He looked off into space. He twirled his moustache. He acted as if he were communing with 100 per cent pro-Nazi spirits on a Nazi planet invisible to inferior beings like me. Words poured from his lips.

He talked of past struggles and future plans. He drew a rough sketch of that future, Nazi-dominated German Reich which—seemingly the dream of a madman at the time that he spoke to me—was before long to be forged by his fanaticism into a bristling reality, a terrible threat to the whole world.

As he paused after each wild statement before launching upon another, I became conscious that, despite the frenzied self-assurance of his words, there lurked in the background a curious lack of self-confidence.

Adolf Hitler, when he is not talking, is strangely ill at ease. Even a casual American journalist suddenly introduced into his presence is embarrassing to him. It is as if he feared that the visitor would look beyond the brown-shirted, swastika-bespangled façade to an inner welter of torturing doubts and maddening hesitations. At both my meetings with Hitler, in Munich and later in Berlin, I thought that way about the strange individual before me—that individual destined to savor despotic power and conquest and yet, at the same time, doomed to shiver at the impact of those grisly forebodings which despotic power and conquest bring to mortals permitted to savor them.

The first glimpse that I caught in Munich of this hidden, haunted Hitler was tantalizing in its brevity. The very next



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Hitler "dishing up more doom for Europe"

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moment he was talking again. And, just as soon as he wraps himself in talk, his doubts and his fears seem to vanish, and he lives anew in a world of swagger and frenzy and domination. "Words, words, words!" If Adolf Hitler knows that quotation, it must serve him, I think, as something for buttressing his courage and restoring to him boundless belief in himself—for words, to him, are strength and magic and armor.

Suddenly Hitler jumped from his seat. Hanfstaengl jumped from his. I jumped from mine. Up went Hitler's arm in the Nazi salute. Up went the arm of Hanfstaengl. Mine stayed where it was. Hitler shook hands with me. He went back to his task of dishing up more doom for Europe.

Putzi led me into an adjoining room. There a chunky, hard-jawed individual in a brown shirt showed me a map studded with pins and explained to me the disposition of the Nazi forces, as of that date, all over Germany.

That individual was Captain Ernst Roehm. At the time he was one of Hitler's leading lieutenants. A few months later he was brutally assassinated in the purge which rid Hitler and Goering of men in and out of the Nazi party who, they thought, were in their way.

I was led out of the Brown House by Hanfstaengl through a back door. On our way to it we suddenly found ourselves in a sort of mess-room. There Hitler was having supper with several dozen assorted Brown Shirts. As I appeared in the room, he looked at me with a black scowl; and he fixed his eyes on me with an expression which seemed to say: "How the devil did *you* get in here?" Putzi pushed me hastily toward the back door.

Only a few months later I was again seeking a talk with Hitler to be embodied in a Collier's article. My quest this time

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led me to Berlin. Upon arrival at the German capital—to which the growing power and menace of the Nazis had projected me from still peaceful, still unconvinced Britain—I had gone again to Putzi Hanfstaengl and asked him to arrange for me another meeting with his chief.

But Putzi had become even more temperamental than he had been in Munich. I had been warned of this. I had heard that a female American trained seal (that's journalistic slang for a special correspondent) who had got herself into Hanfstaengl's Berlin office in the hope of obtaining much solemn, world-shaking lore about Adolf and the Nazi régime had succeeded in worming out of Putzi little beyond: "What do you think of my new uniform? Isn't it gorgeous? I designed it myself."

Nevertheless, I persevered. Eventually I grew tired of Hanfstaengl's will-o'-the-wisp tactics. So I prepared a campaign of my own, with the help of acquaintances with whom I had dealt at the German Foreign Office in earlier and more conventional days and who were still holding down their old jobs and trying to reconcile themselves to the new Nazi methods. (This procedure of mine disgusted Putzi—and he told me so later at the London Economic Conference, where he was galumphing about as some sort of special Hitler agent.) For my second talk with the Fuehrer I enlisted the help of Hans Thomsen, who was later to become Germany's last pre-war Chargé d'Affaires in Washington.

Hitler received me and Thomsen in the big audience chamber of the new chancellery on the Wilhelmstrasse. The last time I had been there was when I had sat beside the desk of Franz Von Papen, Chancellor of the German Reich, while he talked nonchalantly about the Nazis—already impudently marching and cheering on the street just outside the chancellery

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—who were soon to terminate his short and hectic term of office.

Hitler came striding into the room with clear eyes and alert bearing. He was dressed not in the coatless, brown-shirt garb of Munich but in a neat, double-breasted sack suit. Despite the briskness of his entrance, he looked uncomfortable and self-conscious. Obviously he was wishing that he was back in the old rough toggery. But European political etiquette was already closing in on him.

Though his life was at that moment tempestuous, to say the least, he allowed no sign of fatigue to become apparent. He and Hans Thomsen went through the rigmarole of the Nazi salute. Then Hitler and I put on a perfectly ordinary act of shaking hands.

He asked me to be seated. He sat down himself. He was spry—positively dapper—despite his obvious discomfort. You would have thought that he was not bothered about anything really momentous. His face was solemn—but it always is. He did not smile—but he seldom does.

He looked at me expectantly.

Having profited from my previous experience at the Brown House in Munich, I said:

"When I met you before, I submitted to you a list of questions. You did not like some of them. Won't you please, this time, without questions from me, say just what you would like to say, through Collier's, to the people of the United States?" (That's the grand way trained seals talk.) I added a few words about the high importance and impressive circulation of the magazine for which I was working.

The idea struck Adolf as good. For one thing it gave him a chance to start right in talking with no delay whatsoever—to

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talk a great quantity of words, to talk exactly as he pleased, without steering directions or traffic lights—which, I strongly suspect, is the Hitler idea of heaven on earth.

He gazed at the wall across the room. His eyes grew luminous. His pasty complexion seemed to glow. All signs of discomfort left him. He burst into a torrent of words.

Most of it was sheer Nazi propaganda.

He told me eloquently about defenseless Germany in the midst of armed neighbors. He told me what dreadful people he thought Jews were and what pain they had caused and were still causing him. He denied furiously that there had been any Reign of Terror in Germany following his accession to supreme power there. He assured me that he had had nothing whatever to do with the burning of the Reichstag. He tried to impress upon me his yearning for a bright era of better relations between the new Germany and the United States.

If I had taken his words at the value which he obviously set upon them, I should have become convinced then and there that the non-Nazi world was an awful place, that Nazi Germany was the home of terrestrial angels of light, that Adolf Hitler was the man destined to eradicate all evil from the universe through the magical healing powers of the swastika.

I shall never forget the fanatical look in Hitler's eyes while he orated—nor the way he kept tapping my knee as he spoke with two outstretched fingers. While he was doing this, he would suddenly switch his eyes from the contemplation of his own private other world and fix them earnestly on me. I felt quite embarrassed—and, because of the frequent taps from those outstretched fingers, I began to fear that I would get housepainter's knee.

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Hitler seemed to be seeing visions. Fanaticism came into his eyes. He appeared to have forgotten all about Hans Thomsen—and me—and everything else around him. He seemed to have entered into a world of his own.

Adolf Hitler, I think, is never really happy except when he is talking—*not conversing*, but just *talking*, monologuing—either to a visitor seated beside him, or to a multitude packed into a hall or onto a field in front of him.

Talk liberates him from a besetting inferiority complex. It enables him to soar to pinnacles where he feels no inhibitions, no fears. Perhaps, also, it makes him forget how far he has climbed out on a limb of the tree of international politics—and how hard he will fall when that limb breaks under him.

After twenty minutes or so of monologue—punctuated here and there by a few words from me—Hitler jumped up as suddenly as he had in Munich. Hans Thomsen jumped up. So did I.

Again Hitler and Thomsen went through the Nazi salute. Again I got an ordinary handshake from the Fuehrer. Then Hitler strode away quickly, to resume his labors in an inner sanctum—doubtless to the great disadvantage of Europe and the rest of the world.

In addition to my two talks with Hitler, I have seen him on a number of other occasions during the years of his transformation from a spellbinder in a brown shirt into Germany's supreme dictator.

I have seen him on Tempelhof Field, just outside Berlin, haranguing multitudes running beyond a million in numbers, stretching out in all directions—fronted by masses of the Elite Guards of Nazidom in their sinister black uniforms, fringed by regiments of the regular German army—acres and acres of

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humanity, hundreds of thousands of human beings swaying and yelling and crying at the sound of the frenzied voice of a single fanatic.

I have seen him pouring out hysterical eloquence to the brown-shirted Reichstag of his creation at Kroll's Opera House in Berlin. There, keeping himself indefinitely on a pinnacle of oratorical frenzy which, I thought, must surely burst blood vessels in his head and stretch him lifeless on the steps of the rostrum, I heard him shriek—in allusion to his blood-purge of 1934: "For two hours I was the supreme court of Germany!" At those hysterical words, the deputies, in their brown uniforms, rocked and cheered, and madness seemed to have taken possession of Kroll's and everything in it. And outside, Penny, brazenly pushing through the crowd to the lines of Nazi Storm Troopers—locked, hand in hand, into a living chain—tried to wheedle them into letting her get inside Kroll's by announcing ingratiatingly that she was an *Amerikanerin*—which caused several big troopers to smile but got her no further.

I have seen Hitler twice at a Parteitag in Nuremberg—when that beautiful medieval city of thick walls and high towers and sloping roofs and age-blackened bridges was given over completely to the Brown Shirts in their thousands. I have sat in the grandstand only a few yards away from Hitler, while he stood, with hand outstretched, watching the evolutions of his private legions and the enactment by the regular armed forces of the Reich of the successive developments of a sham battle. It included what I now realize was a miniature presentation, for spectators who had eyes to see, of those actual, terrible attacks by Nazi Stuka bombers which, only a few years later, were to be loosed, in deadly reality, on the enemies of Nazidom in Europe and Africa.

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I have seen lovely, lovable Nuremberg swamped in floods of rough Brown Shirts, pushing and swaggering and guffawing—Brown Shirts in such numbers that I could find no hotel room anywhere in the city and was compelled to spend a whole night slumped uncomfortably on a big leather-covered chair in the lobby of the Württemberger Hof, until dawn brought the solace of hot coffee. Through that same night two fat and important Nazis, all bedizened with Nazi insignia, lay slumped in similar discomfort on two other chairs in the same lobby. That fact enabled me to indulge in the consoling reflection that all the swastikas and such-like pinned to the garments enveloping their corpulent carcasses had succeeded no better in getting them a good night's rest than the official permit grudgingly handed out by the Nazi authorities to their companion in sleepiness, that American trained seal, uncomfortably draped over that other lobby chair just beyond the tips of their hobnailed Nazi boots.

Finally, I have seen Hitler—thanks, this time, to Penny, who had insisted that I take her on a little tour of exploration in Berlin—while he was relaxing at the Kaiserhof, his favorite Berlin haunt even after he had installed himself as Fuehrer and Reichskanzler in the chancellery across the way. We peeked at him from a doorway while he was chatting informally and drinking tea with Nazi cronies. Later, in New York, Penny was asked by friends to describe this unofficial glance of Adolf in relaxation which her insistence had obtained. "He looked pasty and he had his hair pasted down and he was eating pastry," she told them.

When he received me in Berlin, Hitler, in his neat blue business man's suit, made a strange contrast to his surroundings.

Beyond the anteroom of his sanctum on the Wilhelmstrasse,

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the corridors were swarming with picked Nazi Storm Troopers, in full uniform, bristling with swastikas and other party insignia, their revolvers dangling in plain sight from their hips—and Nazi revolvers give the distinct impression that they are being carried because they are useful and not merely ornamental. These toughs contrasted ludicrously not only with their Fuehrer but with the officials left over from the pre-Nazi era, who were going about in regular, tradition-hallowed togery as if ashamed of being in such company, looking—and doubtless feeling—like fish out of water. (When I showed the foregoing words, just after I had first typed them, to Hans Thomsen, he fixed wide open eyes on me and asked: “Do you mean *me*?”) The brown-clad, heavily armed guards posted on the street outside—the clanking, strutting Nazis constantly passing by—made one realize that Berlin had suddenly been captured by an army of roughnecks. And the thought that, one flight up, only a few paces away, the biggest Brown Shirt of them all was doing his work in an attire as neat and conventional (almost) as that of his Beau Brummel predecessor, Franz Von Papen, certainly came as a shock to a newcomer like myself in suddenly Nazified Berlin.

When I interviewed Hitler in Berlin Germany was quieting down. The first phase of Hitlerist triumph was ending, the second just beginning. The first phase had consisted of kicking Germany to pieces. The second was being devoted to sticking Germany together again as a prelude to kicking the universe to pieces. Life in Berlin for American correspondents still resembled sitting on the edge of a volcano, wondering when rumblings and smoke would be replaced by lava and fire. That there was relief after the first brutal impact of Nazidom was beyond

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doubt. But it was no more genuinely satisfactory than a reprieve granted to a prisoner condemned to the gallows.

The relentless march of the Nazi steamroller continued. Scarcely a sound came from the régime's opponents. The Socialists, formerly dominant in German politics, were silent. The Centrists, so influential in other years, apparently had been swept onto the ash heap. The Communists, who had polled a million votes a short time before, seemed blotted out of existence.

Yet, despite Nazi predominance, one could not help thinking that the opposition must be somewhere underground, biding its time. As one observer put it: "It's simply impossible that all the Centrists and all the Socialists and all the Communists have suddenly lain down and died!"

We foreigners in those early days of the Nazification of Germany kept asking each other: "Is it a case of Hitler Jekyll and Hitler Hyde? Will the second phase of Hitlerism be an era of constructive statesmanship or destructive violence?"

There was the distinct impression that if Hitler really favored Jekyll tactics he must soon have a showdown with such rabid extremists as Goering and Goebbels, wedded heart and soul to Hyde methods. Some observers believed that the situation inside the Hitlerist ranks was a case of Frankenstein and his monster. They felt that, because Hitler for years had been promising his adherents that the Jews would be uprooted, that the opposition would be crushed, that foreigners would be shown the temper of a new Germany, he would be obliged to make good his violent promises. Sometimes it certainly seemed as if Adolf Frankenstein Hitler's machine were running amuck. Many of us foreigners, sitting on the rim of the German vol-

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cano, occasionally wondered whether Hitler really was the boss of his own show.

And all of us sensed the approach of violence—imminent, engulfing, and terrifying. We had no definite idea what form the violence was to take—*not yet*. Soon—like the rest of the world—we were destined to find out.

The first few years of the Hitler régime showed its growing strength. But they also showed fissures and weaknesses which, had they been wisely utilized by its enemies, might have wrecked Hitlerism before it had reached the dread fullness of its power. Foreign correspondents stationed in Berlin and special correspondents who dropped in there during the first years of Hitler's reign were fully aware of this.

Over mugs of beer in Berlin cafés—while the Nazi masters of Germany paraded and sang outside—we discussed the possibility of an invasion of this new Germany by the Poles and the Czechs—of this Germany so different from the weak German Republic of the first years after the First World War, so dangerous in comparison with that other earlier Germany.

Most of us felt sure that Poland and Czechoslovakia, especially Poland, would not run the risk of having the new Nazi menace develop in accordance with Hitler's blueprints. We knew the mettle and temper of Marshal Pilsudski, Poland's gruff dictator; we knew the great strength (compared with the puny military establishment in the German Reich of those days) of Polish and Czechoslovak land and air forces.

"The Poles will march tomorrow" or "The Czechs will mobilize next week" were commonplaces in our café conversations. For had not Poland and Czechoslovakia been created after World War I by France and France's allies to serve as the policemen of Europe's eastern territory—to be ready, at

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the first sign of a resurgent Reich, to carry out the will of the framers of the Versailles Treaty? None of us would have been surprised if we had waked up some morning and heard, from the direction of Germany's eastern frontier, the rumble of the artillery of Poland, and, from the skies over Berlin, the drone of the airplanes of Czechoslovakia.

That was what we expected in 1933, the year of the birth of Nazi Germany. And we expected it again three years later.

That was when Hitler, obeying one of his intuitions, ordered German occupation of the Rhineland—when the commanders of the German army, in deadly fear of what this might portend, had rushed the building of barricades and the stringing of barbed wire on the Rhine frontier in the firm belief that France would counter Hitler's daring move by an instantaneous invasion of German soil. I saw those barricades and that barbed wire, with soldiers of the Reichswehr crouched in readiness behind them.

But, in 1933, Pilsudski did nothing. The Czechs did nothing. In 1936, their great and powerful western protector, France, did nothing.

In 1933, we foreigners knew that Pilsudski had told France: "If you back me, I will march on Berlin." France hesitated. France reflected—until, finally, Pilsudski, in a huff, signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler. In 1936, we knew that, as Germany's soldiers, in obedience to the intuition of their Fuehrer, poured into the Rhineland, more than one Frenchman of influence had risen up in rage to demand that the French army, reputed the best in the world, counter Hitler's insolent coup with a forest of French banners and a storm of French lead and steel.

But the French army did nothing. The Nazi régime, auda-

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cious and determined, but weak and still feeling its way, was allowed to live. Two golden opportunities were missed.

Then came 1937—and 1938. Hitler and his Nazis strode from weakness to strength, to more strength.

Finally, 1939. At long last, France and Britain—and a few people in the United States—stood stunned by the realization that only by desperate, merciless fighting could democracy survive.

If only Pilsudski and France had nipped the Nazi menace in 1933! If only the French had trampled it under foot in 1936! If only some nation somewhere had defied it in 1937 or 1938! What a tragedy was the blind missing of those chances! Many years before, in allusion to something entirely different, Whittier painted that tragedy when he wrote:

“Of all sad words of tongue or pen

The saddest are these: it might have been . . .”

My general impression of Hitler? Well, at our second meeting as at our first, I was impressed by his unimpressiveness. I was struck by his lack of ease.

In Berlin he was even more ill at ease than in Munich. This may have been (as I have said) partly because of the conventional sack suit in which fashion had encased him.

Again—exactly as had been the case, when under the guidance of Putzi Hanfstaengl, I had walked into his lair at the Brown House—I found Hitler, in Berlin, ill at ease only while his tongue wasn't wagging. Once it started to wag, he was a different man, to whom all seemed for the best in the best of all possible worlds. When Adolf Hitler, on the Day of Judgment, comes up before the tribunal without appeal, the Angel Gabriel

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must see to it that Adolf isn't allowed to start talking. For, if he once gets going, he may get everybody within hearing so groggy around the ears that the proceedings will be adjourned *sine die*—while judge, jury, spectators, and reporters make a frantic dash for the open air. If Adolf once cuts loose, he will try to go on talking all through eternity.

How uncomfortable he is before he starts talking—that is the first memory that comes to me as I look back on my Berlin meeting with Hitler, the Dictator. How comfortable he feels after he has got away to a good verbal start—that is my second clearest memory.

Third comes this:

On the day of my meeting with Hitler on the Wilhelmstrasse I discovered—after I had already entered the chancellery and there was no chance of my returning in a hurry to the Hotel Adlon—that I had left on the table in my hotel room all my valuables. Scattered about conspicuously, in plain sight of anybody who might come in, were my watch, my loose cash, my letter of credit, my American Express checks, and the passport by virtue of which I was being allowed to circulate in Nazi Germany without bringing upon myself special attention from the Gestapo—in short, pretty much everything of genuine value to me, in my capacity of Traveling Correspondent for Collier's, except my pants and my soul.

All through my interview with Hitler, all the time that he was orating and tapping me smartly on my knee, I was thinking apprehensively of that table in my hotel room and of the treasures with which it was covered—or, maybe, *had been covered*. For I also saw visions of maids and waiters and bellhops entering the room and enthusiastically appropriating all the valuables and galloping, with glad cries, into the haze of distance, to

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enjoy a less cloistered and more untrammelled existence than had ever fallen to their lot before.

When Adolf finally stopped talking, I went through the regular motions. I thanked him. I departed sedately from his presence, under the wing of Hans Thomsen. But my thoughts were elsewhere.

In covering the few hundred yards between the chancellery and the Adlon, I unquestionably beat the world's record. I rushed through the lobby and into the elevator and out again at frantic speed. Like a projectile, I hurled myself through the door and across the threshold of my room.

On the table lay my watch, my loose cash, my pocketbook, my letter of credit, my American Express checks, and my passport. Nothing—absolutely nothing—was missing.

I collapsed into the nearest chair. I broke another world's record—the record, up to that moment, in depth, width, and height, for a sigh of relief. Not for a full minute did I give another thought to Adolf Hitler.

That was nine years ago. Never since then, it seems to me, have I enjoyed, in my waking hours, another full minute of that thrice-blessed sort.

Chapter XIV

"With a Frightful, Frantic, Fearful Frown . . ."

Two trained seals (or, if you prefer, two American special correspondents) were sitting one day a few years ago at a little table outside a beer dispensary in Rome. The name of the place, though the Berlin-Rome Axis had not yet been forged, was *Bavaria*, pronounced with every "a" broad and stretched out like a harmonica, after the fashion of Italy. One of those trained seals was H. R. Knickerbocker. The other was T. R. Ybarra.

"Knick," I said, "I am about to interview Mussolini for Collier's. You, I know, have interviewed him. Now please tell me something. I have heard a lot about that famous room in the Palazzo Venezia in which he lets trained seals do their tricks and throws them gobs of raw news as a reward. Is that room very big?"

"Enormous," said Knick.

"Is its floor as slippery as the papers say?"

"Twice as slippery."

Sadly I drew a mug of beer toward my lips.

"Surely the newspapers exaggerated a bit?" I ventured hopefully.

"Not this time," said Knick. "That room in the Palazzo Venezia has the slipperiest floor in the world."

I tried hard to bear in mind that Knick worked for Hearst and was, consequently, allergic to understatement. But the thought didn't console me. When I presented myself at the

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Palazzo Venezia, on the day after our colloquy, I felt as if I were about to compete in a skating tournament with Sonia Henje.

A flunkey in grand livery led me along lofty-ceilinged corridors and through splendid anterooms. He stopped before a closed door. Putting his heels together and bowing low, with an elegance which would have gone over big at the court of the Medici, he motioned me to enter. I entered. He closed the door behind me.

I was in the world-famous room with the world-famous slippery floor.

Far away in one corner, behind a large flat desk, which was almost the only piece of furniture in the room, stood Benito Mussolini. He was frowning. He didn't seem to like me. His frown implied clearly that he was dead against having the tremendous task of shaping the history of the world interrupted by the irruption of an American trained seal.

I started on my long hike across the vast apartment. The polished wooden floor, I noticed immediately, was all that Knick had said. I felt sure that I was going to slip on it in a moment and land hard on its highly polished surface. Mussolini seemed to be wishing that I would.

As I navigated gingerly from square to square of varnished wood, the magnificent chamber of the dictator of Italy manifested itself to my consciousness as a blur of spaciousness and height, paint and mosaic, curtains and mirrors, gorgeous ceiling and tapestried walls. No doubt about its magnificence! As for its size, it struck me as equivalent to a considerable chunk of Central Park. Grimly I set my course for that remote desk in that remote corner, where—straight, stern, and remote—the overlord of Fascism stood waiting.

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At last I cast anchor in front of him, with nothing but the desk between us.

He did not ask me to sit down. Neither did he sit down himself. He just stood there, gazing at me moodily out of dark, piercing, luminous eyes. He did not seem to be enjoying our meeting.

As nonchalantly as I could, I opened the conversation by asking:

"Do you prefer to speak in French or English?"

"Let's speak French," said Mussolini gloomily.

Then suddenly, his eyes flashing as if in anger, he looked straight at me, thrust forward his right arm almost threateningly, and, leaning on his left hand, which was clutching the corner of the desk, he rapped out in English:

"No interview!"

He pronounced it with the accent on the last syllable. I registered acute disappointment.

"No *interview!*" he repeated.

It seemed final. I bowed slightly.

"Gosh darn it!" I reflected to myself, "This is pretty rough on a man who has come all the way from New York to Rome, at somebody else's expense, to interview Mussolini. *Somebody else* won't like it at all if I return from Rome to New York, again at his expense, to tell him all about a talk between me and Mussolini with everything in it except words."

So I decided to ignore the unfriendly opening which Benito had just given to our meeting. Exactly as if he had not warned me, prompted by some imp of defiance, I remarked, quite as if he had not just flung out that ultimatum:

"It is difficult for me to know what questions to ask you. I don't want to be indiscreet, yet, at the same time—"

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Whereupon he, prompted in his turn by some imp of inconsistency, suddenly exchanged his frowning gloom for a light and casual manner.

"Listen, Ybarra," he said, after taking a few steps on the other side of the desk. "Suppose you submit to me a list of written questions (he was still talking French, with an awful accent). If your questions are indiscreet, I will not answer them. If they are not indiscreet, I will answer them. When can you give me such a list?"

"Right now."

I proceeded to pull out of the pocket of my coat a sheet of paper on which I had typed some questions. It was like a magician taking a rabbit out of a hat. For the first time since we had swum into each other's ken, Mussolini seemed not displeased that I was alive. For the first time a look of something like approval appeared on his face.

"Good!" he exclaimed. His arm shot forward like a piston rod. His fingers stretched out to grasp the sheet of paper which I had drawn from my pocket.

He took it. Bending over his desk, he stood reading my questions, one finger slowly moving along the lines of typewritten words.

I got uncomfortable.

You see, some of those questions were, to put it mildly, direct. In fact, they were raw, altogether too raw to be put up suddenly, just like that, to the temperamental and fiery ruler of an impulsive and touchy people. They had been prepared largely for my own guidance. The idea had been to slip over all or some of them, casually (if at all) in case my talk with Mussolini was progressing pleasantly. They had been jotted down merely to refresh my memory—never had I foreseen

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their coming, in that raw typewritten state, under the eyes of the Fascist dictator. I shifted uneasily from foot to foot.

It soon became perfectly obvious that Benito Mussolini did not like my questions. In fact, their effect on him was even more unfavorable than that of the questions concocted by Hanfstaengl and me at Munich for Adolf Hitler.

At the time of my visit to the Palazzo Venezia Mussolini was trying to have his cake and eat it too. He was vociferously telling the world how much he loved peace and how much he wished to help maintain it in a flourishing condition all over the universe. Yet, simultaneously, he was bellowing to his fellow-Italians, in the stentorian tones of Fascist militarism, that rifles and bayonets and bullets and bombs and cannon and tanks were simply marvelous things which ought to be no more unfamiliar—as part of the regular equipment of all patriotic sons of Italy between the ages of nine and ninety—than spaghetti. Yes, in those days, Mussolini—unlike the Mussolini of later Axis days—was strutting most truculently and exhorting every Italian to strut with equal truculence in the wake of his own martial self. My questions, I am afraid, laid more stress on this discrepancy in the Mussolinian game than was reconcilable with the pussyfooting, you-can't-print-that rules of international diplomacy by which trained seals of that period were supposed to abide.

Mussolini read my questions from start to finish. Not one did he miss. As he read, he mumbled aloud, his strong Italian accent giving the English words a most outlandish sound.

One question made him look up at me and grunt scornfully. Another caused him to shoot at me a scorching glance, as if to say: "The nerve of you, to ask me that!"

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Having read through the list, he again raised his eyes and regarded me sternly.

"I hope they are not *all* indiscreet," I ventured.

His face was enigmatic.

"You *will* answer them, won't you?"

Ever since I had arrived in front of him, he had been pacing from one end of his desk to the other, appearing alternately to left or right of a big lamp which stood in the middle of it. This was disconcerting.

"Is it etiquette," I asked myself anxiously, "to follow a dictator around, when one is received in audience by him, or to stand still while he circulates?"

Eventually I decided to go after Mussolini. So the two of us paced solemnly to and fro, he just behind the desk, I just in front of it—like a pair of pouter pigeons.

On the day that I met Mussolini, he was wearing a black morning coat with a touch of gray in it, trousers of black and gray, and a black tie with a gray stripe. He looked very spick-and-span. That, by the way, is not always the case with him. Somebody else, who had also been led into The Presence, once confided to me, with a note of horror in his voice, that he had found Italy's master wearing a crumpled collar and looking as if he had not shaved for two days.

The Fascist chief is shorter than I had supposed. Indeed, he may be classed as a little man—a truth which came to me as a violent surprise, in view of the fact that until then I had known him only from photographs. My surprise—like that of other trained seals of the period—arose because so many of his pictures showed him making a fiery speech from a high platform, or haranguing a multitude from the top of an armored car, holding himself very erect, his arm outstretched in the Fascist

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salute, always in martial uniform, striking martial attitudes—a line of conduct well calculated to make one add five or six inches in one's imagination to his stature. I felt as if I had been cheated. The word "shrimp" came into my mind. But I did not utter it. Which was probably just as well for what insurance men would call my expectation of life.

Also, I found Mussolini balder than I had thought him. On the top of his head was an expanse of hairlessness between two thin patches of hair over his ears. For some time those tufts had been growing thinner, also grayer.

For Mussolini was not so young as he had been. And that fact had in it, for him, an element of tragedy. Growing old!—he, Benito Mussolini!—who had drilled into the Italians the belief that they were a nation overflowing with youthfulness—whose black-shirted Fascists were chanting their hymn "Giovinezza," that arrogant clarion call of aggressive youth, with all the fervor that comes from young muscles and young hearts, as they paraded past the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia, on which, still strong of limb and clear of eye, their leader was wont to perch himself as often as possible.

Yes, there was something tragic to Benito Mussolini in the thought that he was (at the time of our meeting) in his fifty-second year. *And now he is fifty-nine!*

At times he grows sensitive. "He is just like a woman about his age," they told me in Rome.

His birthdays for years had passed unchronicled. A trained seal who wanted to write a piece, shortly before the outbreak of World War II, on how Mussolini meant to celebrate the next anniversary of his first appearance in this world, got only cold looks and warning gestures from the officials whom he approached for information.

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"Lay off!" they advised him. "Il Duce wants nothing said about it!"

At times he used to show a philosopher's resignation as he contemplated the passing of the years.

"It's nonsense to talk about being young after you are thirty-five," he confessed on one occasion. And, in the same resigned mood, he remarked:

"Youth is a malady of which one becomes cured a little every day."

At the Palazzo Venezia—when I visited it—there were no regular office hours. Mussolini, at that stage of his dictatorship, was in the habit of working there with no regard for time.

For instance, he received me in the Great Hall of Slipperiness in the Palazzo Venezia at half past seven in the evening. Such an hour, hardly likely to become popular for Wall Street conferences, seemed to him quite normal for transacting business. Almost every day during that period he used to stay at his desk until nine or ten at night. Sometimes a particularly important session of the Fascist Grand Council kept him busy until long after midnight.

The amount of work which he used to get through was in-

...the course of a year," he once remarked, "I give more than 6,000 audiences and interest myself personally in 1,887,742 things that my secretary lays before me." Of course, he was young—but not so much as one would think.

...to thunder, in those days, to his fellow-countrymen: "Be military! Be militaristic! Be warlike!"—as he plunged relentlessly forward, throttling all opposition at home, reducing the Italian press to a mere rubber stamp for countersigning his imperious wishes.

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For those were the days of triumphant Fascism, of the high-water mark of Mussolinian arrogance. Five years before—even three years before the day on which I met him in Rome—one had gathered the impression, in the course of a visit to Italy, that Fascism was one thing and Italy another. Even in those days, to be sure, it was obvious that Fascism had won a crushing victory over everything else in Italy. But always there was a faint undercurrent among certain elements of the population which implied that Mussolini and his swaggering Fascists were conquering warriors and the rest of Italy a conquered people.

But, in 1934, on the occasion of my visit to the Palazzo Venezia, there was nothing of the sort. Italy and Fascism, Fascism and Italy, Mussolini and Italy, Italy and Mussolini—all seemed inextricably mixed up with each other. There was practically no tangible hint of conqueror and conquered; you simply didn't know where one left off and the other began. What a difference between that Italy and the restless, resentful Italy, the Italy of menacingly stirring anti-Mussolinism, which one sensed afterward!

In the Italy of triumphant Fascism, people hardly bothered any more to give the Fascist salute. A few years before, Fascists had gone strutting around giving it most aggressively—and, on every side, hundreds of other Italians were giving it, either because they wanted to, or because they wanted the Fascists to think that they wanted to. But—in the year of my talk with Mussolini—what was the use of giving it? Why insist on proclaiming, by means of sticking your arm out truculently in front of you, that you believed in—or, at least, acquiesced in—the state of affairs imposed upon Italy by Mussolini?

Wallace Irwin once wrote some verses about a youth who

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drank so freely while on a spree that his friends had to pilot him home—

“And when they put me in my little bunk,
You couldn’t tell my jag and me apart.”

That’s the way it was with Fascism and Italy when I met Mussolini.

Shortly before he had boasted:

“I want to make a mark on my era such as a lion makes with its claw!”—and he had drawn his fingernails through the covering on the back of a chair beside him, tearing it from end to end. Little did he suspect that, instead of his making a mark like that on his era, his era would soon be getting ready to make it on him!

Mussolini paced to and fro behind his big desk in that big room in the Palazzo Venezia. Suddenly he stopped. He faced me.

“Your name is Spanish, is it not?” he asked abruptly.

I said that it was.

“Where are you staying?”

“The name of my hotel. Picking up a pencil, he scrawled the name across the sheet of paper on which my questions were written. I could not help feeling that our conversation was taking a turn not at all calculated to influence the course of history.

“How long do you intend to stay in Rome?”

“As long,” I replied—throwing a glance full of meaning at my list of questions lying on his desk in front of him—“as necessary.”

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He paced some more, behind the big desk. So did I, in front of it.

"You will answer my questions, won't you?"

The beginnings of an expression of amusement stole into the corners of his eyes. Still, however, he would not commit himself.

Then, all of a sudden, a delightful smile flashed over his stern features. Many compliments had I heard paid to the renowned Mussolini smile. They were deserved, all of them.

He stretched out his hand.

"Thank you," he said.

"Thank you," said I.

We shook hands solemnly. He turned again to the papers on his desk (including, I hoped, mine).

I started on my return hike across those acres of slippery floor. Practice had not made me perfect. Far from it. I still felt as if at any moment I was going to bump my head suddenly against a square of polished wood and forget my name. During about six-sevenths of the journey I thought of nothing but my feet.

Then I remembered Mussolini.

When I was almost at the door through which I had made my entrance—and was about to make my exit—I looked over my shoulder.

Il Duce was no longer standing or walking to and fro behind that big desk. He had transferred himself to a post close to a bust placed just beyond one end of his desk. He was no longer smiling. He seemed to be trying to look like a blend of Bonaparte and an ancient Roman. All his origin—me—which had been in abeyance here and there

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conversational contact—seemed to have rushed back twofold. In the last brief glimpse of him which I got before reaching the door, he gave the distinct impression of a dictator buoyed up by the hope that I would slip and break my neck.

Outside the door at the far end of the room the flunkey who had ushered me in leaped to attention. Again I got the Fascist salute. I was led through severe stone corridors and down somber stone stairways until I emerged from under the main portals of the Palazzo Venezia into the surge and din of Rome's street traffic.

And those questions?

Well, I waited a day. I waited another day. A third day I waited. And a fourth.

Then the news was conveyed to me, in an official manner which admitted of no misinterpretation, that the dictator of Fascist Italy was not going to answer the list of queries which I had submitted to him.

"They were indiscreet, I suppose," said I to myself ruefully. And I went over them in my mind.

One question ran as follows—it was the one which had made Mussolini look up and grunt at me!

"In America we attach much importance to an opposition party and to a free press. Do you consider that, in the United States also, these are incompatible with a strong government?"

There was this question—the one, by the way, which had provoked that scorching Mussolinian eye-flash:

"Many Americans think that a militaristic Italy such as you are creating might prove a menace to world peace. Do you think otherwise—and on what do you base your belief?"

Et cetera.

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Yes, as I think the matter over, honesty compels me to acknowledge that—in view of the European situation of that date, and of the delicate standards governing international diplomacy and international statesmanship, and of the proper code of conduct for internationally active trained seals—my questions *were* indiscreet.

Chapter XV

"Here's a Pretty Mess! . . ."

BEFORE this war, shortly after my return to the United States from one of my frequent trips to Europe, a friend remarked to me: "I know of no more violent contrast than the one between the gaiety of your attitude toward the past in European countries and the gloom of your attitude toward the present and future there."

There was much in what he said.

Year after year before the present war I wandered as a journalist up and down Europe, savoring the splendor of her cities, the charm of her countryside, the solidity of her traditions, the richness of her wit, the wisdom of her philosophy, the lure of her ways of life. But always those years revealed to me in ever-quickenning tempo Europe's dark heritage of

Even when the sunshine sparkled at its brightest on European fields and streets, on the spires of cathedrals and the battlements of castles, I had the feeling that clouds were gathering—that Europe was helpless in the path of cruel winds of destiny. All over the European continent, in those years between the world's two most terrible wars, it seemed to me that anybody not entirely enslaved to wishful thinking must necessarily see the massing of those clouds and feel the rise of those winds. And now that they have loosed upon us history's most shattering tempest one must ask: "Has Europe been engulfed at last by

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irrevocable tragedy? Has the fair continent of wisdom and beauty been overtaken at last by irremediable catastrophe?"

Is Europe the Doomed Continent?

On the answer to that question should depend the future European policy of the United States.

If, after the present war, the European nations enter another era of discord, the United States should draw away from Europe. This would not mean isolation. It would simply mean self-protection. If, on the other hand, after the war, the European nations enter an era of harmony, the United States should draw closer to Europe. Entanglements, unless absolutely unavoidable, with a future Europe doomed to discord, would harm the United States. Co-operation with a future Europe devoted to harmony would help the United States.

Which kind of Europe is it to be?

Optimists call the future of the European continent bright. Pessimists call it black. After more than a quarter of a century of close association, as a journalist, with Europe, I must say that the pessimists seem to have placed the burden of proof on the optimists.

Europe's political record in the past is one of the most dismal swamps in the whole geography of world history. Most of those who study that catalogue of conflict will be inclined to agree with a melancholy pessimist of my acquaintance. That bird of gloom was asked the other day when he thought the nations of the European continent would be living together in happy harmony. He replied: "At the earliest, I should say in A. D. 2942—or, just to play safe, let's say about 500 years after that!"

Some years ago I wrote an article for the Outlook. I ran across a copy of it recently. It drips with pessimism. I saw no

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bright days ahead for Europe—and I said so—in thousands of mournful words.

Well, since then Europe has been plunged into tragedy far blacker than anything I foresaw. The reasons for this are the same as when I wrote that article of mine. First among them I placed—and I still place—the lasting discord among the various races on the continent of Europe.

In that article I wrote: "All this may be implying that Europe is thinking in terms of war. But—when has Europe thought in any other terms? The correct thing among Europeans is to think of Europe as a parcel of warring nationalistic ambitions . . . Europe as a continent can go to rack and ruin. We used to be told at school that the whole was greater than any of its parts; but the European state of mind at present makes it incumbent on Europeans to believe that any part of Europe is more important than the whole of it."

That was written more than ten years ago. Unfortunately, it still makes sense. And how!

A few years later I wrote another article—this time for Collier's (when I was European Editor of that periodical). It was entitled "The Doomed Continent." Again I drew a somber picture of Europe, I said, simply could not attain a state of enduring peace. The European continent, I asserted, was condemned to one or the other of two states of being: *war* or *near-war*.

When I wrote that melancholy article, the optimists of the moment were chanting that Europe's problems could be solved without bloodshed. They were prophesying that Utopia would soon descend on the European nations in the form of boundaries welcome to all; of minorities perfectly satisfied with their treatment at the hands of majorities; of internationalistic lions every-

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where reclining peacefully by the side of internationally-minded lambs. With the gloominess which long sojourns in Europe were rapidly making second nature in me, I commented: "All very pretty. But a short talk with an average Frenchman or German or Czech or Hungarian should be enough to clear the minds of those optimists. Anybody trying to find a workable solution of Europe's problems—that is, while human nature in general and European nature in particular remain unchanged—would be more profitably employed unmincing minced meat, unmashing mashed potatoes, or unscrambling scrambled eggs."

That's what I said in 1935. I still say it in 1942: I said it with the greatest reluctance then. I say it with the greatest reluctance now.

In my article I used as an illustration not only the classic example of France and Germany but also the example of two small European nations which were—and are—absolutely typical of the whole witches' cauldron of Europe: Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

In 1935, the Czechs were on top—and the Hungarians were just about the sorest people on the continent of Europe. After their defeat in the First World War, one part of their country had been given to Rumania, another to Yugoslavia, still another to Czechoslovakia. Hungary, by the Treaty of Trianon, had been deprived of nearly three-quarters of her pre-war territory and of nearly two-thirds of her pre-war population.

I took a trip through the Hungary of those days. A disgruntled Hungarian told me about a farm with the house and barn in Hungary and the land in Yugoslavia. Another showed me a photo of a house close to the frontier of Hungary and

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Czechoslovakia—a frontier so drawn that the owner of that house could hardly step outdoors without setting foot on foreign soil. Next I was shown a photograph of a Hungarian farmer driving a cart along a road.

“That farmer,” I was told by a Hungarian, “must drive twenty miles every day in order to cultivate his land, although it is right across the road from his house.”

“Why?” I asked.

“So as to avoid crossing the Rumanian frontier.”

Finally, in a crowning effort to bring home to my foreign mind the extraordinary hodgepodge created by the treaties of 1919—a hodgepodge typical of the settlements following typical European wars—I was asked to look at a plan of the estate of Prince Batthany, a Hungarian magnate. Before the partition, I was told, the prince's entire estate had been in Hungary. After the Treaty of Trianon, part of it was in Austria, another in Czechoslovakia, a third in Hungary. “Which,” my Hungarian informant drily added, “tends to make rational farming difficult.” And he added, in the impassioned manner of discontented Europeans of those days:

“Revision of the treaties signed at the end of the World War is necessary in the interests of all nations. Revision is the only basis for peace.”

Yet—only a few days before I heard that—I had been talking in Prague, the capital of Hungary's next-door neighbor, Czechoslovakia, with Dr. Eduard Benes, the astute and bright-eyed president of the Czechoslovak republic—the same Doctor Benes who today, as head of the exiled Czech government in London, is bravely defying the authority of Adolf Hitler, now cruelly imposed on his native land. In perfect illustration of the well-nigh hopeless tangles of continental Europe, President

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Benes championed the exact opposite of the Hungarian idea of how Europe was to be kept from becoming The Doomed Continent.

"Territorial revision is out of the question," he said. "I can well understand that the Hungarians should be dissatisfied with the settlement of their affairs after the war. But what they consider injustice is, in the eyes of us Czechoslovaks—and in the eyes of Rumanians and Yugoslavs—justice." He continued:

"There must be no attempt at territorial revision. One hears a lot about peaceful revision of treaties. But how can there be peaceful revision, in view of the hostile attitude in pro-revisionist countries toward us anti-revisionists?"

Well, there wasn't any peaceful revision of treaties. Instead, we have World War Number Two. Today, pro-revisionist Hungary has won back—for the time being—most of the lands she lost as a result of her defeat in World War Number One; and anti-revisionist Czechoslovakia—for the time being—lies in the dust. But how about tomorrow? Tomorrow Czechoslovakia in all probability will be back on the map and Hungary back in the dust. And so on. In 1935 I wrote in *Collier's*:

"In Czechoslovakia and Hungary one finds incarnated the whole tragedy of Europe."

That is as true now as it was in 1935.

Europe today can show a brand of confusion that beats anything that existed in 1935. To illustrate this statement one needs only to take a look at the most recent history of a group of European nations—Poland, the Baltic Republics, and Finland. The things which have happened—and are happening—in those countries constitute a high-water mark in European complications.

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Poland, a little over three years ago, was enjoying in peace the independence and union which had come to her after long enslavement to foreign masters. But in September 1939 Adolf Hitler invaded the Polish Republic from the west. Soviet Russia invaded it from the east. Poland's armies, hopelessly outnumbered and outclassed, were beaten. Germany annexed western Poland. Russia annexed eastern Poland.

In June, 1941 Hitler fell out with Stalin. He attacked the Russians. Germany's armies drove the Russians out of eastern Poland; they brought that entire country under German rule. Thereupon Poland's exiled government in London allied itself with Russia. That's a typical European tangle.

Now, let's glance at the three Baltic Republics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

After the First World War they became independent of Russia. After the start of the Second World War Russia re-annexed them. After Hitler turned on Stalin German troops occupied them. After that—what? Will those republics recover their independence? Will they go back to Russia? Will they stay under Germany? Your guess is as good as anybody's.

Now let's take a look at Finland.

Russia, soon after the beginning of the present war, attacked the Finnish Republic. Despite heroic resistance, the Russians crushed Finland's armies and annexed much Finnish territory to the Soviet realm. Meanwhile, Germany looked on—without lifting a finger to help the Finns.

Then Nazi Germany went to war against her former ally, Soviet Russia. And the Germans now cynically told the Finns: "Join up with us and we'll get back for you the territory which Stalin, with our connivance, took from you." Finland joined

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Germany against Russia. That made lovers of democracy all over the world—including the United States—switch their sympathies from democratic Finland to totalitarian Russia. In 1940 we were damning the Russians; in 1942 we are blessing them.

And what will become of Finland? If we and the British and the Russians crush the Germans and the Finns, will Russia be allowed to annex as much of Finland as she wants? Or, will the Germans—but that will do! My brain is whirling!

The present subjugation of the French to the Germans will not last. France will live again. Germany’s sun will set some day as it did in 1918. Franco-German relations are a perpetually moving merry-go-round—or, rather, sorry-go-round.

In 1806, Prussia lay helpless at the feet of Napoleon. Yet, in 1814 and again in 1815, conquering Prussian soldiers swaggered on the boulevards of Paris. In 1871, Germany, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, dictated terms to a vanquished France. In 1940—in the same French railway car, in the same French forest, where, in 1918, Ferdinand Foch had granted an armistice to a broken Germany—Adolf Hitler granted an armistice to a broken France. It will be France’s turn next to down Germany.

To the eternal antagonism of the French and the Germans other bitter European antagonisms have been added—and the sum total is again Armageddon. And so it will be, I fear, until far into the future.

Idealists, I know, think otherwise. They foresee federations of friendship among European nations, harmonious fusings of clashing ambitions—all to be brought about within our lifetime.

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I admire these idealists. I envy them their dreams. But I cannot respect their conclusions—yet. The entire dead weight of European history is against them.

To achieve Adolf Hitler's projected union on the continent of Europe—his so-called New Order—the Nazis are obviously counting upon the worst of all possible cements, *the cement of force*. The edifice of the Fuehrer's towering ambitions, his United States of Europe, would be the falsest and weakest of unions.

First, there would be one supreme super-state—Nazi Germany. Then would come one privileged satellite-state—Fascist Italy. After an Italy harshly ruled by Germany would come certain other satellites, with crumbs of privilege tossed to them by their overlord in Berlin. After these would follow a number of vassal-states, the lands overrun and crushed before or during the Second World War by the Axis armies because they dared defy the relentless march of aggression and conquest. This list of vassal states would probably include Albania—Austria and Czechoslovakia—Poland—Norway and Denmark—Holland, Luxembourg, Belgium, France—Yugoslavia and Greece.

The United States of Europe, as visualized by Adolf Hitler, would be no free association of free nations, free to choose their own destiny. It would be the association of master and servant, or of master and slave. Whatever union it might have would be the union of Sing Sing.

There is a shining exception in Europe to chronic European racial and linguistic discord. That exception is Switzerland.

There we have a case not only of Europeans speaking differ-

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ent tongues and belonging to different races yet living together in harmony, but also an instance of the most amazing thing imaginable in discordant Europe: *French-Swiss* and *German-Swiss* getting along together without friction, without the slightest craving to cut each other’s throats.

And there are also Swiss who speak Italian and Swiss who speak still another tongue, Romansch. Yet they all got along perfectly well during World War I—and they are doing exactly that in World War II.

The reason is that all the Swiss are not Swiss first and then something else—they are *Swiss first, Swiss next, Swiss last, Swiss all the time*.

To them, Switzerland is holy ground. Her history of sturdy championship of freedom is their Bible. Her tradition of tolerance is their religion.

If only the whole continent of Europe could be like Switzerland! But apparently union like that of the Swiss is possible on the European continent only in miniature. And that is a tragedy for Europe—and for the whole world.

Yet we must not forget that there *was* in Europe’s past one instance, on a big scale, of a nation which kept together for a long time despite the fact that it included within its borders inhabitants of different races, speaking different languages, obeying different traditions.

That strange conglomeration was the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To the amazement of critics, to the confusion of prophets, that empire endured for centuries. In fact, it held together so well that many people all over the world failed to realize that it carried within itself the germs of its own dissolution.

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It is difficult to express in words what an unholy mixture that empire was. It included an incredible variety of Germans and Hungarians and Slavs and Latins. All remained for centuries under the rule of emperors of the Hapsburg family, enthroned in Vienna.

The Hapsburgs governed their ramshackle realm with a curiously efficient form of inefficiency. They astutely applied the old *divide-and-rule* policy. In their extraordinary empire—where seventeen different languages were spoken, to say nothing of an even greater number of dialects—they long seemed to be reconciling irreconcilable differences.

Once a Viennese summed up the Hapsburg method in an immortal quip. He said: "Austria Hungary is ruled by despotism tempered with *Schlamperei*." *Schlamperei* is a Viennese word through and through. It means, as nearly as it can be translated at all, laxness or slackness or slovenliness.

Until the end of the First World War, despotism-tempered-with-*Schlamperei* muddled through in Teutonic Vienna and Magyar Budapest and Latin Trieste and Slavic Prague. Then, in the wake of the crushing defeat suffered by the armies of the Emperor Franz Josef, the Austro-Hungarian house of cards collapsed. At the end of 1918, the Hapsburgs—letting the reins of despotism slip through their tired fingers—perished in a swamp of *Schlamperei*. Europe's most successful experiment in large-scale inter-racial federation was dead.

There you have Europe—her chaotic past—her bloodstained present—the dark shadows over her future.

On a continent bristling with trouble the worst troublemaker is Germany. If there is to be a Europe with which the United

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States can work in harmony, that Europe must be created at the expense of German dreams of aggression and conquest.

Yes, it all boils down to this: *something must be done about Germany*. Many suggestions have been made as to how the Germans should be handled if they are crushed in the Second World War as they were in the first. I shall take up four of these suggestions. Each has its advocates as a means of saving Europe from being The Doomed Continent. These four suggested ways of solving the German problem are: *Extermination, Subjugation, Collaboration, Separation*.

Now, *extermination* of the Germans is out of the question. It is the sort of panacea proposed by angry people and never considered again by them after their anger has given way to calm thought. Hearing that solution proposed nowadays takes me back to days of many years ago, when our Mexican problem was the thorniest issue confronting the government at Washington.

In those far-away times, excited Americans—with their senses temporarily absent on leave—used to shout at dinner parties and over club tables: “Why, the only thing to do is to line up all the Mexicans against a wall and shoot them!” Whereupon other dinner guests and club members would waggle their heads in solemn assent and return to their food and drink with the air of people who had met a problem and solved it.

But no Mexican was backed up by any American against any wall. And that’s exactly what will happen after excited Americans of today have solved the problem of Germany by exclaiming: “Oh, it’s quite simple!—just line up all the Germans against a wall and shoot them!” The German nation, like the Mexican, isn’t going to be shot. Edmund Burke said that you cannot indict a nation. Well, you cannot shoot a nation either. I’d suggest

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as a starter that advocates of such a solution get busy picking out the wall against which the entire German nation is to be lined up preliminary to getting shot. That will hold them for a while—maybe until they come back to their senses.

As for the *subjugation* of Germany, it has been tried. And it didn't work.

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, was based on the theory that Germany—with much the same boundaries and population that she had possessed in 1914—would continue to exist as a national entity in Europe, and that she could be kept in a state of subjugation by those who had beaten her.

The framers of the Versailles Treaty visualized a Germany *economically subjugated* by the necessity of paying staggering reparations. They pictured a Germany *militarily subjugated* by the reduction of her army to a puny force of 100,000 men—and by the elimination of the world-renowned German General Staff, which had long been the principal experimental station and forcing-ground of German military efficiency. They dreamed of a perpetual control over Germany, through the domination of the European continent by France, with Britain at her back—and with the support of new nations created for the express purpose of keeping Germany down, notably Poland and Czechoslovakia.

But that is *not* the way it worked out. The Versailles calculations went wrong. The huge reparations imposed on Germany were collected only in part and only for a short time. As for the military clauses of the treaty, Germany eluded them from the start. At first she got around them cautiously and only in a small way. Then she grew bolder year by year in her subterfuges and tricks and evasions.

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Then, finally, Adolf Hitler impudently kicked the military clauses of the treaty into the ashcan. He brazenly re-armed Germany to the uttermost notch of terrifying readiness for another war. By doing that he proved the futility of seeking the subjugation of a Germany with practically the same boundaries and the same population as she had had before the First World War.

It is often argued that if the Allies had only marched into Berlin after their military victory in 1918, without stopping at the way-station of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, the subjugation of Germany would have been complete and lasting.

I do not agree. I do not think that you can subjugate a virile nation of 65,000,000 people—furious in the humiliation of defeat, lusting for vengeance—surrounded by nations which, though heavily armed, yearn not for war but for peace. Even after the roughest sort of treatment of Germany at the hands of those who had defeated her, the policing of the European continent against Germany, I am convinced, would have been too much for those who had won the First World War.

What actually happened? After helping to draft the treaty of Versailles, Britain washed her hands of the European continent and tried to go back to business as usual. France, left on the continent as chief of police, placed the League of Nations and the Czechs and the Poles as policemen to watch over the Germans—and then proceeded to go to sleep.

It soon became clear that those who had won the war were losing the peace. Little by little the Germans shook themselves free of their shackles. Finally, in appalling menace, Nazi Germany stood before the world in the stark fullness of naked military power. The proud policy of subjugation—initiated in 1919 at Versailles by Clemenceau and Lloyd George, to keep

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Germany from regaining her former strength—became, in 1938, the panic-stricken policy of appeasement, clutched at by Daladier and Chamberlain in a desperate attempt to keep Germany from conquering Europe.

And that brings us to the suggested solution of *collaboration*. That solution presupposes harmonious relations between Germany's foes and a postwar Germany with her pre-war population and her pre-war boundaries practically unchanged.

I can see little if any hope for the success of such a scheme. It ignores past performances. It is like betting on a horse which has lost every race in which it ever ran on the theory that by the doctrine of chances it simply must win next time. It is the old policy of appeasement in a new suit of clothes.

There is too much of the myth of the *Herrenvolk*—the master-people—in the makeup of the Germans to allow them, as long as their country remains big and potentially powerful, to get along amicably with other nations whom they consider the *Haves* of this world, in contrast to themselves, the *Have-Nots*.

I am not one of those who draw a sharp dividing line between Hitler and the German people. I do not believe that Hitler or any other individual is solely responsible for German aggressiveness. I do not believe that he or any other individual can yoke the Germans, against the will of the great majority among them, to the chariot of insane personal ambitions and drive them toward goals of his own exclusive envisioning.

Hitler is not a cause but an effect. He is not the force which has loosed catastrophe on Europe; he is the instrument of mysterious forces from which springs catastrophe. The late Kaiser Wilhelm II has been proved a silly, play-acting, strutting marionette—yet he, too, was once considered by millions of

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people the root of all evil in Europe. There is much more in Adolf Hitler than there ever was in Wilhelm Hohenzollern. But Hitler no more steers the storm of today than Wilhelm Hohenzollern guided the tempest of yesterday.

In World War I we heard too much about the Hohenzollerns. We heard too much about the Prussian Junkers, about the Prussian officer caste. We heard too little about Germany.

In World War II we are hearing too much about Hitler. We are hearing too much about the Nazis. We are hearing too little about Germany. We are hearing too much about Stalin. We are hearing too much about the Reds. We are hearing too little about Russia.

In the wake of the Hohenzollerns, in the wake of the Prussian Junkers and the Prussian officer caste, marched millions of Germans. They were Germany. They fought with skill and courage and ferocity for a régime—the arrogant régime typified by strutting Wilhelm II, by those monocled lieutenants of the imperial German army who used to push visiting foreigners off the sidewalks of Berlin.

In the wake of Adolf Hitler, in the wake of the threatening swastikas and the cruel tanks and the swooping Luftwaffe of Nazidom, millions of Germans are again marching. They are Germany. Again they are battling, with brain and bravery and fury, for a régime—the menacing régime typified by swaggering Adolf Hitler and by his brown-shirted desperadoes of German National Socialism.

Before World War I there may have been profit in differentiating between Hohenzollerns and Germans. During that war there was none. Before World War II there may have been point in distinguishing between Nazis and Germans. During

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this war there is none. Between the two wars there may have been reason for tracing a line of demarcation separating Lenin and Russia—Communism and Russia—Stalin and Russia. To-day there is none.

The battle is joined. The regiments of Germany deploy. The tanks of Russia grind forward. The planes of Germany are raining steel. The artillery of Russia is blazing. What price Nazi doctrines? What price Bolshevistic tenets? What price Hitler's Germany as against Goethe's Germany? What price Czarism?—Leninism?—Stalinism?

"Here they come! They are singing *Deutschland über alles!* Stand to your guns, mujiks—commissars—kulaks—RUSSIANS! For Mother Russia!"

No, I can see little that is promising in a scheme of collaboration between a Germany—irrespective of its political régime—undiminished in size and potential power, and nations bent on living beside such a Germany in a future Europe of international harmony and decency.

I respect every attempt to create a genuine United States of Europe. But it is one thing to respect a dream as a dream and quite another to respect it as a coming reality. I may sound cynical. I may be branded as a hopeless pessimist. But I can't help it.

When I hear about a United States of Europe, with France as one of its states and present-day Germany as another, I shake my head very, very sadly. In such a United States of Europe I can see the *states* all right—but I cannot see the *united*. And if that be disgraceful, cynical pessimism, so be it! Like Luther, I must exclaim: "Here I am and here I stand. I cannot do otherwise!"

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And now we come to the fourth suggested solution—*separation* of Germany into a number of independent states, none of them strong enough to be a menace to the peace of Europe.

I must confess right away that I don’t think much of that scheme as a solution of the problem of the European continent. *Nevertheless, it seems to me the best of the lot.*

Germany was not an active menace to the peace of Europe until she became united. As long as the Germans lived in a lot of independent states—bound together geographically, racially, and linguistically, but *not* politically—the German peril remained potential.

Then Bismarck came along. He forced the Germans into union. He convinced them that the taste on their lips of power wielded in common would be far sweeter than the discords over which they had smacked their lips in the past. With the disappearance of the independent German kingdoms—of the independent German grand duchies and duchies and principalities—of the independent German city-states—the small measure of security from the German menace enjoyed by the European continent up to that moment also disappeared. The German peril was born.

Whether Bismarck designed German union to be a peril is neither here nor there. Perhaps he never looked beyond the colossal task of creating a great nation. But the fact remains that he created not only a great nation but a great peril.

Adolf Hitler, following in the footsteps of the Iron Chancellor, has contemptuously sought to obliterate the few traces still remaining of German disunion. As a result of Hitler’s passion for uniformity, which surpasses even that of Bismarck, there is still less of Bavaria and Baden and Württemberg and Saxony in Nazi Germany than there was in Hohenzollern Germany.

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By his passion for German union, Adolf Hitler, in the earlier phases of his career, brought a formidable accession of strength to the German peril—until, finally, he loosed it, in full fury, at the throat of Europe and of the world.

So why should we not at least *dream* of solving the problem of the European continent by seeking to put Germany back where she was before Bismarck took her in hand? Why should we not favor the carving out of a group of separate states from the body of the German giant?

Let's help put independent Prussia back on the map. And independent Bavaria. And independent Saxony and independent Württemberg. Let's cut away the ties that bind together in one German Reich the former grand duchies of Baden and the Mecklenburgs—and the formerly free cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck—and all the rest of the independent German states that Bismarck welded into the deadly German peril which we now face. Once they become accustomed to this drastic reversal of history, the Germans might like it. And the rest of the continent of Europe most certainly would. Even if such a move did not entirely remove the German peril, it would probably give Europeans a chance to pull themselves together and breathe more freely than they had for generations.

Maybe, however, the *separation* of Germany would work no better than *extermination* or *subjugation* or *collaboration*. But, I repeat—of the four suggestions, *separation* seems to me to be the best. That isn't saying much but it's saying something.

And one thing must be remembered: never, in the whole course of history, have the Germans worked long in *collaboration* with their neighbors—never have they been compelled to live in *subjugation* to a foreign power—never have they suffered *extermination*. But they *have* existed in a state of *separa-*

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tion from each other. That Germany profited from the separation of the Germans in the past will be ferociously denied by Teutonic ultra-nationalists. But the rest of Europe undoubtedly profited from it. And that, after all, means much on a continent constantly haunted by the specter of doom.

So let’s plan for the vivisection of Germany by competent vivisectors of nations. That is, provided, of course, that the Europe which emerges from this war is mercifully devoid of any control by Nazis and Fascists—mercifully devoid of Hitlers and Mussolinis and Goerings and Goebbelses. If totalitarianism survives the present conflict, we shall simply have the old problem all over again—with Hitler talking and talking, as he talked at me in the chancellery on the Wilhelmstrasse—with Hitler’s satellite, Mussolini, scowling and scowling, as he scowled at me in the Palazzo Venezia. How can there be hope of fruitful co-operation of the United States with such a Europe—with the *Doomed Continent*, in other words?

A gloomy picture, isn’t it? Perhaps I have made it too gloomy.

Perhaps there is, after all, the possibility of a brighter future for the European continent—a future based not on economics and politics but on something deeper and finer. Somehow—some day—may not all that is beautiful and noble in Europe’s glorious yesterdays combine to crush out the evil now besetting her and transform her from The-Europe-That-Is into The-Europe-That-Ought-To-Be?

All through European history runs something that might, in some subtle way, become the best of all bonds of peace and union. That something is the superlative magic of the *Europe of the Spirit*.

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That magic shines in the paintings of Rembrandt the Hollander and of Raphael the Italian. It speaks from the writings of Pushkin the Russian and of Cervantes the Spaniard. It lights up the thought of Gallic Voltaire and of Teutonic Goethe. It ennobles the work of the artists who designed Europe's mighty cathedrals—France's Notre Dame and Germany's Cologne and Italy's St. Peter's. It sparkles in the music of Mozart the Austrian—it smoulders in the music of Sibelius the Finn—it thunders in the music of Beethoven the German.

The immortal works of these immortals breathe the very essence of European union, of world-union; they level all barriers of language and religion and race. If the Europeans can build a bridge from the glory of their past across the tragedy of their present to a future worthy of their superb heritage of grace and splendor and beauty, then the United States ought to draw closer and ever closer to the new Europe—for such a Europe can never become the Doomed Continent.

Chapter XVI

"So Go to Him and Say to Him . . ."

THAT most renowned of Spanish savants, Professor Miguel de Unamuno, said to me some years ago in Salamanca:

"The Spaniards can never solve their problems unless they kick King Alfonso off the throne."

"Hot stuff," said I to myself. "Very hot stuff. How grand that will look as the first sentence of a front-page article in the Sunday Magazine of the New York Times!"

So, having said goodbye to Unamuno in the book-filled study of his Salamanca residence, I walked back toward the Gran Hotel, where I had parked Penny, with the impressive and still unwritten sentences of my future New York Times article marching majestically around inside my skull.

"Penny," said I, entering the hotel, "while you were sitting here waiting for me, I have had a perfectly fine . . ."

"I wasn't sitting here waiting for you," interrupted Penny.

"Unamuno actually told me that, unless Alfonso. . . ."

"Nothing that Unamuno told you," declared Penny, "can possibly be half so interesting as what happened to me while you were interviewing him."

"But Unamuno . . ."

"Unamuno be damned! Listen. . . ."

And Penny, again imperiously squelching my craving to tell all about the treat that was in store for the Sunday editor of the Times as soon as I could marshal my battalions of per-

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sonal prose and send them parading across the Atlantic as first-class mail matter, proceeded to inform me that, instead of waiting dutifully for me in the hotel, she had sallied forth, adventure in her eye and a camera in her hand. She had headed for the Plaza Mayor, Salamanca's famous main square.

There her attention had been caught by a bevy of attractive young girls in a gaily decorated motor car.

At once Penny trained her camera on the bevy. It was delighted. It smiled in the friendliest way. It arranged itself in pretty poses. Beckoning Penny to the side of the equipage, the young girls told her (in sign language) that they were about to go home and wished her to make more pictures indoors. So Penny followed them.

The car stopped before a house in a near-by street. The bevy cordially motioned to Penny to come in. She did. In a room inside the house the bevy draped itself in more pretty poses. Penny photographed assiduously.

An older woman came into the room. She fixed a cold eye on the scene.

"How did *she* get in here?" asked the woman, looking fixedly at Penny.

"We invited her," explained the bevy. The older woman shook her head disapprovingly.

"She must go."

"But we want more photographs," said the bevy.

By this time a couple of men had come in. The older woman pointed out Penny to them. They whispered together. The men nodded their heads emphatically.

"Yes," they said, looking in an embarrassed way at Penny. "She must go!"

"She must not!" protested the bevy.

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The attitude of the older woman and the two men was getting on Penny's nerves. So she bowed and went out the door—with the bevy still protesting loudly.

At the hotel she told the clerk where she had been. He was horrified. The house, he told her, was a house of ill (very ill) repute. The bevy was no better than it should be. Its drive in the car around the Plaza Mayor had been for purposes of self-advertisement. The two men who had turned up during Penny's photographing operations were proof of the truth of the saying that it pays to advertise.

"*Now* do you want to talk about Unamuno?" asked Penny triumphantly.

In Salamanca I also had another talk.

It was the spring of 1937. The Spanish Civil War was going full blast. Already two trained seals working for Collier's had penetrated into Loyalist Spain and talked with some of its leaders. The editors of Collier's decided to get another trained seal into insurgent Spain and have him talk with Rebel Generalissimo Franco.

I was selected for the job. Being conversant with the complications of Europe-on-the-Brink, I said to myself:

"Of course, the best way to get into Franco's Spain will be through pro-Franco Portugal. What's the use of trying to slip in through neutral France?"

That sounded wise. But it wasn't.

I got myself to pro-Franco Lisbon. Everywhere pictures of the Spanish rebel commander adorned the walls of Lisbon's buildings, with most complimentary captions underneath them.

"Getting from here to Salamanca is going to be easy," I told myself confidently, as I sat in an anteroom of a Portuguese

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governmental office, waiting for a *laissez-passer* for Franco Spain.

Easy? There's nothing like having supreme confidence that something will happen in Europe in order to cause its opposite to happen.

Portugal's government refused to let me cross the Spanish frontier. In Salamanca, where Franco was, the rebel authorities, I was told, held Collier's in very low esteem. They had arrived at the conclusion that its editorial attitude toward Franco was perfectly dreadful. One way, they decided, to bring that home to Collier's was to refuse to make my acquaintance.

"Is that final?" I asked the Portuguese government.

"Absolutely," it said.

The Portuguese governmental tone carried conviction. So I prepared to quit Portuguese territory. But I wasn't through yet with the Portuguese government.

After getting my Spanish assignment from Collier's, I had wired Harold Callender, who was in London as European representative of the New York Times Sunday Magazine, suggesting that I do him an article on Lisbon, at that time one of the hottest hot-beds of intrigue on the whole European map. On returning from my unsuccessful bout with the Portuguese government to my Lisbon hotel, I found a thin Portuguese citizen in a yellow raincoat waiting for me in the lobby. He showed me a detective's badge.

"Come with me to the police station," he said.

"May I go to my room first?"

"Certainly. But I will go with you."

Never taking his eyes off me, he accompanied me in the elevator to my room. Then he accompanied me down to the lobby again and piloted me to one of Lisbon's leading police stations.

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A severe official held before my gaze a telegram from Harold Callender addressed to me. It said: “Send article on Lisbon, hot-bed of intrigue.”

“*Hot-bed of intrigue!*—What does that mean?” he growled.

I tried to turn it off lightly. I tried to prove to him that Callender had paid Lisbon a high compliment. That did not get me anywhere.

Next I tried to persuade him that it was wrong to hold me responsible for Callender’s choice of words. I tried to explain to him how eccentric American newspaper executives were, particularly when they worked in Europe.

That also failed to get me anywhere.

The severe official, fixing a most sinister eye on that telegram, growled all over again:

“Hot-bed of intrigue? *What does that mean?*”

I started a new line of explanation. It was as unsuccessful as its predecessors. I became convinced that I was going to spend the night not at Lisbon’s leading hotel but in Lisbon’s leading hoosegow.

Then, suddenly, that severe official relented. He stopped glaring at Callender’s telegram. He stopped glaring at me.

“Do you intend to leave Lisbon soon?” he asked.

“As soon as possible.”

That pleased him more than anything I had said so far. He bowed me out of his office. He told my private detective, seated outside the door, looking very vigilant indeed, to go away and leave me alone.

Next day I was headed for Bordeaux, France, on a French steamer.

In France I told the French authorities that I wanted to enter Franco Spain. I expected to be turned down cold.

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"Go as far as you like," they told me.

At the Spanish frontier I humbly asked Franco's officials when they would let me across. I expected to be kicked violently back into France.

"This minute!" they answered.

I hired myself a car in San Sebastián and headed toward Salamanca without recovering from my amazement. Europe before World War II was certainly a paradoxical place! What I should have done when I got that Spanish assignment was to say to myself: "Portugal looks easy as a stepping-stone into Spain. France looks hard. Therefore, I'll lay off Portugal."

In Salamanca the authorities seemed to have forgotten all about the huff into which the name of Collier's had thrown them.

After a merely normal period of waiting, I was told to report at Franco's headquarters, which were in a palace formerly occupied by the Bishop of Salamanca.

I presented myself there.

A handsome young Spanish officer, aggressively aristocratic, beckoned me to follow him. He wore a dark brown shirt, a brown strap across one shoulder, black trousers, high black boots. On his shirt a black cross on a white ground proclaimed him one of the *Requetés*, stiff-necked royalists, who, from the outset of Spain's civil war, had been fighting fanatically on the side of the insurgents.

We ascended a grand marble staircase. Two gigantic Moorish sentries stood at the foot. They wore light-green khaki coats and trousers fringed with red. Around their waists were broad silk sashes, striped red-yellow-red—the traditional colors of pre-republican Spain.

We entered a big room. A tarnished painting of a saint was

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all that remained there to remind one of the Bishop of Salamanca.

While we waited, a procession of solemn generals filed past on their way to or from Franco. There was General Faupel, Hitler's ambassador to Franco's Spain, who stalked past with his arm upraised in the Nazi salute. Probably he had been asking embarrassing questions as to why Franco's troops did not get forward faster. Then came General Monasterio, fresh from hard fighting around Madrid, concerning which—in view of stone-wall Loyalist opposition—he had been able doubtless to report little of a nature calculated to please Franco.

A door leading to an inner room swung open. The officer who was escorting me motioned me to enter.

Rising from his seat behind a broad desk, heaped with letters and papers, a man of medium height came toward me—Francisco Franco, the Spaniard who was bent on becoming Spain's Fuehrer, her Duce.

He was wearing the regulation khaki uniform of the Spanish army. Polished boots reached to his knees. Pinned to the left side of his coat were several ribbons of various hues, reminders of his long years of service in Spanish Morocco.

Though civil war was raging all around him and many battles remained to be fought by him before the heroic resistance of the Spanish Loyalists was to end, the man who longed to be Spain's Hitler-plus-Mussolini was not thinking primarily of military matters. What bothered him most was the fact that he had to concern himself with civilian chores. Motioning to the heap of papers on his desk, he complained to me:

"Do you realize that we are being forced to improvise whole civil administrations for the parts of Spain now under the control of our forces? Formerly, the administration of Spain

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was centered in Madrid, the capital. Its work was carried on by no less than 22,000 functionaries. We are trying to get along with only 200!"

Francisco Franco seemed to resent that very much. He spoke as if he considered it a personal affront. I felt like asking him why he had revolted against the Spanish government if he was so against the job of governing. But I refrained. Which was doubtless just as well for my continued good health.

At the time I talked with Franco he was far from victory. In Madrid and elsewhere in Spain the loyalists were putting up a splendid fight against him. Inside his camp there was bickering among his followers. And there was that heap of papers on his desk—scores of them—largely about those civilian matters which he hated.

"At such a time as this, General, isn't a trip to the fighting front a sort of rest for you?" I asked.

He nodded violently.

"It is!" he agreed. "It most certainly is!"

I wonder how he likes having his desk heaped with orders from Hitler.

At Gödöllő, near Budapest, some years ago, Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary, pointing to the ceiling over his head, said to me very solemnly:

"Up there is the sacred crown of Saint Stephen! Some day it will be placed on the brow of another King of Hungary."

I was proud of having wheedled Horthy into such a disclosure. It would look grand, I reflected, in a place of honor in the New York paper for which I was working. My pride was such that, when I met another American trained seal also busy in that same vicinity, I told him:

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“Got a good interview with Horthy today. He said . . .”

“I know what he said,” interrupted that low creature. Working his face into something supposed to be a resemblance of the Hungarian regent, he shouted:

“Up there is the sacred crown of Saint Stephen. Some day. . . .”

Much hurt, I walked away from him. I met another trained seal. I told him:

“Just saw Admiral Horthy. He . . .”

“Spoke as follows,” said that uncouth beast. “‘Up there is the sacred crown of . . .’”

Horthy, I learned, always slipped that line to trained seals who interviewed him. He had slipped it to Charley Grasty of the New York Times. He had slipped it to Larry Hills, of the Paris New York Herald. He had slipped it to Jules Sauerwein of the Paris Matin. I stopped boasting about how confidential the Admiral had grown with me on the subject of the future which he was mapping out for the sacred crown of Saint Stephen.

Trained seals. That (as I have already explained) is slang for American special correspondents. The phrase was used most often, before the present war, by American correspondents stationed regularly in some European city, to denote special correspondents who wandered all over Europe picking up interviews and other feature stories for American magazines or newspapers. The attitude of the average regular correspondent toward the average trained seal was compounded of envy because the latter did not have to stay in one place and joy because he wasn't going to stay long in the particular place where that regular was stationed.

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The regulars looked upon trained seals with a certain amount of condescension, as if they didn't quite belong. In revenge, the trained seals looked upon the regulars with a faint hint of superiority, because a seal's wanderings brought him in touch with more international Olympians than could possibly be bagged by any correspondent marooned in one place.

For years I was a regular correspondent in Europe. And for years I was a trained seal swimming about in troubled European waters. So I know how both feel. As a regular, I used to rush off great numbers of dispatches by cable to the New York Times from Berlin or London. As a trained seal, I used to collect the material for special articles—for the Times, Collier's, or other employers in the United States—and mail those articles, according to the circumstances of the moment, from Europe, the Near East, Northern Africa, or Latin America.

One of the reasons why trained seals were automatically beyond the pale in whatever foreign town they happened to be doing their stuff was that they weren't conversant with the spot news of that particular town.

Let us say, for example, that T. R. Ybarra, D.T.S. (Doctor of Trained Sealing) suddenly comes snorting and puffing into Vienna. His object there is to get some story of scope and significance, involving not only Austria but probably Czechoslovakia and Hungary and possibly Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Seething with thoughts about that tremendous unborn brain-child, T. R. Ybarra walks into the Grand Café or the Imperial Café and falls right into the midst of a gathering of American correspondents regularly stationed in Vienna.

"Ha, you here again?" they chorus—with just the hint of a sneer. "Must be something big stirring in Central Europe.

“AND SAY TO HIM . . .”

Yesterday, Marcossou. Today, Ybarra. What’s bothering you?”

I tell them. They don’t seem impressed. Apparently the subject of my quest suffers from remoteness. Their attention strays. They go back to Viennese shop talk. They exchange mysterious local lore. Their heads bob north and south in nods of assent, west and east in nods of dissent.

“What’s bothering *you*?” I inquire.

“Don’t you know? Good heavens, don’t you know?”

“I do not.”

“Why the Austrian Christian Socialists joined forces this afternoon with the Austrian Socialist Christians.”

As I can make no intelligent comment on that, they ignore me for the rest of the evening.

For years before I met Jean Sibelius I had been an admirer of his compositions. This was largely due to my friend Olin Downes, musical critic of the New York Times—one of the leading devotees of the brooding and massive music of the Grand Old Man of Finland.

Downes never missed a chance to extol Sibelius to me. Once he took me to Carnegie Hall to hear a Sibelius symphony, and, in the midst of one of its somber passages, in the midst of the deep silence with which the audience was reverently listening to it, he suddenly caught my thigh in a grip of iron and whispered hoarsely: “Don’t you hear strange beasts, in dark forests, writhing in torment? Don’t you? *DON’T* you?” Irrespective of what strange beasts of the forest might be doing in forests or anywhere else, *I* most certainly was writhing in torment—but even that experience with Downes failed to check my growing admiration for Sibelius.

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One summer day, a few years ago, Downes bobbed up at the office of the New York Times in Paris and asked to be recommended to some good hotel in the vicinity. Percy Philip, whose acquaintance with *la ville lumière* is encyclopedic, promptly recommended such a hostelry. Downes went to it, checked his baggage, and proceeded to the near-by Paris agency of the North German Lloyd, to make arrangements for his imminent return to the United States.

Just after he had appeared at the Times office, I poked my nose into Percy Philip's sanctum—for I, too, was on one of my frequent gallivanting trips across the face of the European continent.

"Your friend Olin Downes just blew in," Percy told me. "You will probably catch him at the North German Lloyd."

So I hastened around there. Sure enough, there was Downes. He was in a state of great perplexity and excitement. Several Germans, clustered around him, were getting nowhere in endeavors to calm him.

Downes hailed me as if I were manna from Heaven on legs.

"Saved!" he ejaculated fervently.

"What's the matter?"

"I came here to fix things in such a way that I might get on the liner on which I've booked my passage home at Cherbourg instead of Bremen."

"Well, can't you?"

"Of course I can!"

"Then what's the excitement about?"

"These people say they'll make the needed change and notify me at my hotel here."

"Well?"

"I've forgotten the name of my hotel!"

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"You're staying at the Hotel de—," I rattled off glibly, having just heard its name from Percy Philip.

Downes eyed me in awe.

"How did you know?"

"Oh, I have ways of finding out things—."

And that's all he could elicit from me. Ever since, I think, he has considered me a cross between the oracle of Delphi and Sherlock Holmes.

I took Downes around to where I had deposited Penny temporarily. As usual, Downes began pouring out tales about Jean Sibelius, his musical demigod. One of them concerned his first meeting with the celebrated Finnish composer.

Immediately after his arrival at Helsinki, Downes told us, he had hailed a taxicab and whispered to the chauffeur, in a voice husky with emotion, a certain name and address. As the taxicab whirled on its way, Olin Downes reflected raptly that soon he would be in the presence of the man whom he considered one of the greatest musical geniuses that ever lived; that soon he would be dragging Sibelius down from the cloudland of his dreams to the world of gross realities!

"I must do my best to behave toward him with the proper degree of respect!" Downes said to himself.

That night—or rather very early next morning—Downes was being towed along the Esplanade, the principal thoroughfare of Helsinki, by a group of Finns lustily reveling in his honor. Though he felt highly honored, he also felt very sleepy. So presently he announced firmly:

"Bed for me!"

He started to say farewell to the revelers. Some of them, yawning, saw the force of his reasoning. In fact, all of them did so eventually—except one.

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"Where shall we go now?" shouted that lone warrior of the night, a brawny individual aged well over seventy years. "What places are still open?" Finding no co-operation, he strode off alone, jovial and tireless, while the policemen stationed along the Esplanade smiled upon him as he passed, with reverence and affection—for was he not Jean Sibelius, the Grand Old Man of Finland?

Some hours later, Downes, waking up with difficulty, telephoned to one of the Finns of the previous night.

"At what time," he inquired, "did our friend get home?"

"He didn't get home at all!" replied the Finn.

As a result of that and other Sibelius yarns from Downes, I cabled from Paris to Charley Colebaugh suggesting that Collier's ought to run an article by me about Sibelius. Charley cabled back his approval.

So Penny and I abandoned Paris, entrained for Copenhagen, en-boated for Stockholm, and presented ourselves, in due course, at Jarvenpää, some twenty-five miles outside Helsinki, capital of Finland, where Jean Sibelius resides.

In Paris, Serge Koussevitsky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra—as soon as he heard that I was headed for Finland—had made me promise to ask Sibelius what had become of a silver mug which he had presented a few years before to the famous Finn.

I asked. Sibelius, leaping from his chair, as spry as a boy, returned with the mug.

"Tell Koussevitsky that I drink out of it every day," he said. "But—alas!—not brandy any more!—no more brandy!" The doctors had been getting after the Grand Old Rounder.

The most striking things about Jean Sibelius are the deep furrows between his eyes. There are half a dozen of them, so

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deep as to seem to have been scooped out with a knife—proof of the concentration with which he has made music for over half a century.

He is stocky and broad-shouldered. His eyes are blue and bright. His head, in defiance of the unwritten laws governing the personal appearance of most musical geniuses, is as bare as an eggshell. And—again defying these laws—he was wearing, when I met him, a double-breasted suit, which made him look like a businessman. Not for Jean Sibelius are the velvet jackets and flowing ties favored by other composers!

He jumped from topic to topic with incredible vivacity. At one moment he was talking about his music—next he was praising a cake sent to his wife in celebration of her birthday—next he was pouring out reminiscences of a visit to the United States.

“I got an honorary degree from Yale,” he told me and Penny. “You should have seen me! I was all dolled up. I had, on my head, one of those big, flat-topped academic caps. When, on my return home, I showed a friend a photograph of myself in all this toggerly, he remarked: ‘But why did they make you a hussar?’ ”

The Finns love Sibelius for his frankness. If he does not like somebody he says so. Richard Wagner, for example.

“What do you think of the *Meistersinger* prelude?” somebody asked him.

“Ham and eggs!” he replied.

When Penny and I met him, he told us—in German: “Wagner? Not my liqueur!”

In his talk, he jumped bewilderingly from English to French, French to German, German to English, and then back to German again. (Incidentally, when he happened to be talking

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German, he kept addressing himself directly to Penny, who doesn't know a word of it.)

"*Sehen Sie, gnädige Frau,*" he would begin—while Penny edged away from him apprehensively—and then, in voluble apology—and in English:

"Oh, I'm so sorry! Please forgive me!"

But a minute later he would be leaning excitedly toward her and asking her earnestly:

"*Aber, gnädige Frau, verstehen Sie nicht dass die Amerikaner . . . ?*" And Penny would implore me with her eyes to rescue her.

The master's house is on a hillock which juts up abruptly from pleasant farmland. "There are too many trees around it," his daughter complained to us, "but my father refuses to allow a single one to be cut down." It is a sort of giant log cabin, with big exposed rafters in its ceilings, and big logs showing, uncovered, along its walls. For thirty-five years Sibelius has lived in it; for thirty-five years he has composed his music in his workroom, under the big beams of the roof, seeing from his windows a view of lake and forest—Finland in miniature spread out before him.

When my visit had come to its close, Jean Sibelius accompanied Penny and me to the door of his house. As he crossed the threshold, he caught sight of the chauffeur who had taxied us from Helsinki. At once he strode forward, hand outstretched in cordial greeting. The chauffeur, proudly straightening his shoulders, grasped the hand in his.

"How goes it?"

"Okay, Professor Sibelius."

That chauffeur was a friend of his—like every other Finn.

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Once I talked with a tall, slender, and handsome young man in his early twenties in a room of a quiet hotel on the left bank of the Seine in Paris. The hotel was of the sort that one associates with small incomes and unostentatious lives, such a room as might appropriately have sheltered everyday Americans on an inexpensive tour of Europe.

Yet every appearance in public of that young man all through the first years of his life had caused men to bow respectfully and women to curtsy politely, amid the dipping of proud banners and the roar of saluting artillery. For he was the Archduke Otto of Hapsburg—and in Paris, though an exile, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary to millions of "unreconstructed" Austrians and Hungarians of the era that followed the First World War. To them, he was their sovereign liege lord by the grace of God, immeasurably above other mortals, always to be addressed reverently as "Your Majesty"—just as if the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, ruled over by his Hapsburg ancestors for centuries, had never crumbled before the blows of victorious enemies—just as if he himself were not an exile living in that modest hotel room instead of in the magnificent palace of Schönbrunn, outside Vienna.

"Please sit down," said Otto of Hapsburg.

His hair was brushed back from a pale, aristocratic brow. His clothes, though well-cut, had no trace of dandyism: they were fashionable without suggesting that their wearer was a man of fashion. His eyes brimmed with liveliness and kindness. He acted as if being interviewed by an American journalist was equivalent to getting a holiday from school.

And he promptly showed that he was no mere sprig of royalty holding himself aloof from the world. With charac-

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teristic frankness—being frank had already gotten him into trouble more than once with convention-ridden mentors, including his mother, ex-Empress Zita—he said to me:

“Some European statesmen seem to have been struck with blindness.” (Well I knew whom he had particularly in mind.) “They are leading nations straight to perdition. All through history, whenever nations have engaged in a race to arm themselves, such a race has meant war. Ever since the collapse of the disarmament conference, there has been an armament race all over Europe. The effect of that on the maintenance of peace—” The sentence trailed off into an expressive gesture of the hands, an impatient shrug of the shoulders.

Some time before I talked with Archduke Otto in Paris, I had heard a charming little story about him. I had always wondered whether it could be true. Now, with Otto seated only a few feet away, I realized that my chance had come to find out. So I asked:

“Did you, when you were a little boy, during your first years of exile in Switzerland, persuade the servitor under whose protection you were taking a stroll along the Swiss-Austrian border to allow you to step across the boundary line and pluck a flower on your native Austrian soil?”

The archduke’s eyes lit up.

“I did!” he answered instantly. “I plucked that flower on Austrian soil when I was ten years old. Already I had been three years in exile. Ah, but it was good to be back in Austria, if only for a few seconds! *Mein Vaterland!*”

Boyishly eager in his manner, he continued:

“I should love to visit the United States.” (Since he said that, his wish has been fulfilled. He is here now.) “You Americans treat your problems so broadly. You fling about thou-

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sands of millions of dollars casually, whereas European nations make a tremendous fuss over ten millions.

“I don’t think America can isolate herself from the rest of the world. Things are so complicated nowadays that all nations must necessarily be mixed up with one another. Look at the nations of Europe! Look at little Austria!”

I asked Otto whether he had ever spoken over the radio. He shook his head.

“After all, silence is better than speaking—over the radio or any other way,” he replied. “I admire statesmen who keep silent. For instance, there was Marshal Pilsudski of Poland. While he was alive, he said so little and kept so much in the background that one hardly knew what position he held in the Polish government. Yet it was quite evident that he dominated everything. And, whenever he spoke, his words carried great weight.

“Another man like that is Stalin of Russia. He, too, is silent most of the time. When he talks, however, one remembers well what he says.”

In the light of the conquest of Austria by Nazi Germany, the archduke’s views on the problem of Austria-Hungary at the time of our talk take on timeliness and importance.

He prefaced them by asking: “What do Americans think of Hitler?”

“They do not like him,” said I.

The archduke then remarked that the German system of National Socialism, with its suppression of the freedom of speech, could not possibly be put into effect in Austria. The National Socialist race theory, he added, was untenable and cruel, and would be, in the lands along the Danube—inhabited by peoples speaking many languages—an element of discord.

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He said that in 1936; what has happened since has most certainly proved him right.

There was a string attached to my interview with young Otto of Hapsburg. In his entourage were several noblemen of the old Austro-Hungarian empire, whose fidelity to the youth whom they considered their emperor had not been impaired in the slightest either by his exile or his impoverishment. One of these—Count Degenfeld—had been instrumental in arranging my appointment with the archduke. A second—Baron Wiesner, whom I had known in Austria—had slapped me delightedly on the back when, emerging from the interview, I had remarked that I liked Otto. But both, despite the approval with which they had viewed the prospect of getting into Collier's my record of what the heir of the Hapsburgs thought about various things, were adamant on one point: I must show them whatever I wrote before sending it to New York.

Of course, I realized what that meant: the text of my version of what the archduke had said must first be submitted for approval to his mother, the ex-Empress Zita.

Zita, I knew, was a woman of great pride and will power. Throughout Otto's exile she had insisted that he was every inch an emperor; and she had exacted from all those around him the respect due to a monarch. (I had asked Baron Wiesner what to call Otto when I interviewed him. "Call him Your Majesty," that unreconstructed Austrian royalist had instantly replied. So I did—but only once. After that Otto and I got along altogether too well for such a lofty form of address.)

As I wrote out my transcript of our talk, I felt qualms. "Will the ex-Empress slash this to ribbons?" I asked myself. But there was no alternative. I had solemnly agreed to the condition made by Count Degenfeld and Baron Wiesner. So I crossed the

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Seine to the little hotel where I had met the archduke and left the first draft of the interview for their perusal—and that of Otto's mother.

In that draft I had included something that the impulsive young man had said about Adolf Hitler. “Surely that will be killed,” I reflected.

I was right. When the manuscript was returned to me, the sentences about Hitler had been crossed out. I mailed it to Collier's without those sentences.

But after Hitler had brutally overrun Otto's native Austria, and the imperial youth had expressed himself publicly in sulphurous language about the Nazi Fuehrer, I saw no reason why what he had said to me in Paris about Hitler should remain a secret. So I printed it in a newspaper article. And I don't see why it should be kept out of this book. So here goes:

Leaning eagerly toward me, with a mischievous smile lighting up his face, Archduke Otto said to me:

“Have you ever read *Mein Kampf*? I tried to read it once. But I couldn't get to the end of it. Do you suppose *anybody*, in any part of the world, ever read the whole of it?”

“Anybody who can get as big a price for German champagne as for French champagne must be a born diplomat.” That's what Adolf Hitler is reported to have said about Joachim Von Ribbentrop. So he snatched Ribbentrop out of the wine business and put him to work on the Nazi diplomatic front.

There Ribbentrop has been by no means so successful as when he was a traveling salesman selling the Rhineland champagne grown by Otto Henkell (whose daughter he afterward married) at figures which (so they say) equaled what was being paid for Mumm or Heidsieck or Veuve Clicquot.

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But in one thing Ribbentrop has succeeded—as yet he has not fallen into disgrace with his explosive chief. He has weathered squall after squall since he superseded Konstantin Von Neurath as Hitler's Foreign Minister. And he keeps a smile on his face—accompanied, doubtless, by whistling to keep his courage up. For he has good reason to worry. Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, Himmler, Ribbentrop—that is the order in which most of the world's inhabitants would like to lay violent hands on Nazidom's leaders.

Once I talked with Ribbentrop.

He had just become Hitler's Foreign Minister. Clouds were gathering and growing black, but peace still clung precariously to Europe and the rest of the world.

When I met Von Ribbentrop, he was wearing the uniform of Hitler's elite S.S. corps, in which he was an officer—black coat with the red-white-and-black swastika around one sleeve; black trousers; and high black riding boots. He is a handsome man; he looks at you out of lively blue eyes. What struck me most about him was the deepness of his voice. It contrasts sharply with his almost dandified elegance. Imagine, if you can, the vocal tones of a Prussian drill sergeant issuing from the lips of a Beau Brummel!

In our talk, the Nazi Foreign Minister steered clear of important political matters involving Germany and other nations. He was loquacious enough, but he confined his remarks largely to matters guaranteed not to set the Thames or any other stream on fire.

As in the case of Archduke Otto of Hapsburg, I had heard a story about Ribbentrop which I was keen to get corroborated or denied by him. At the time of the outbreak of World War I,

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he was in Canada; and, according to that story, he had smuggled himself across the Atlantic, in an attempt to get back to Germany, by hiding in one of the coal bunkers of a transatlantic steamer—in the company of another German who had scooped out a hole big enough for two in the coal that filled the bunker.

“Is that true?” I inquired.

“It is,” he answered. “That other fellow and I had an awful time. We almost smothered.”

In view of Ribbentrop’s extreme unpopularity now in England, it comes as a shock to remember that, at the time I interviewed him, he enjoyed a sort of mild popularity there—not so much because of any merit of his own, but largely as a contrast to Alfred Rosenberg, apostle of pure German Aryanism. The latter had sojourned in London shortly before Ribbentrop became German Ambassador to the Court of St. James—and he had made mistakes in England which didn’t do him or his already (to put it mildly) unpopular Fuehrer one bit of good.

For instance, the bumptious Alfred, who professes passionate admiration for everything in German history that can possibly be construed as heroic, spent so much time in London boasting of the achievements of Hermann, the great legendary hero of ancient Germany—who actually defeated an army of ancient Romans sent to subdue him—that some of the English compelled to listen to him got terribly fed up and violently pro-ancient Rome. Ribbentrop, realizing this, talked in England about hunting instead of Hermann; and he acted as if he preferred jokes to solemn historical dissertations—thus proving, as somebody put it, “his understanding of the fact that the greatest man in England after the King is Mr. Punch.”

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Beau Brummel though Joachim Von Ribbentrop is—dandified and elegant though he is—there is about him that something beyond definition and analysis which applies to many Germans even of the best type—that something which leads non-Germans who meet them to think: “No matter what this man may do or say, he can never fool me into believing him a gentleman.”

I said to President Benes of Czechoslovakia, as I sat one day a few years ago in his office in the great Hradčany, that proud citadel-palace towering over Prague:

“Mr. President, I came here to interview *you*. Instead, you are interviewing *me*.”

His bright eyes twinkled.

“You came here to get something out of me, didn’t you? Well, I intend to get something out of you.”

Eduard Benes all over! He knew that I had just come from the United States—from England—from France—from Germany. And, though he had many sources of information in all those places, he was not going to pass up the possibility of getting more. Not for nothing had he been called the cleverest statesman in all Europe.

Today Czechoslovakia is under the heel of cruel Nazi domination, and Eduard Benes is heading its exiled government in London. But, just as the Czechs, in their temporarily conquered homeland, are giving no signs of submission to their oppressors, so Eduard Benes is giving not the slightest hint of acceptance of the “new order” arrogantly proclaimed for Czechoslovakia by those who drove him from the Hradčany. And, while he waits and hopes, I know that he questions everybody whom he meets, weighs what they say in that alert mind of his, pieces



T. R. Y. in the courtyard of the Royal Palace, Madrid

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it together, adds it to something which he has just heard from somebody else—just as he questioned me that day in Prague and weighed what I said and “got something out of me.”

Four times I have talked with Eduard Benes. On the dates of my first three talks with him, he was Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia and right-hand man of splendid old Thomas Masaryk, first president of Czechoslovakia. On the occasion of my fourth talk, Eduard Benes was Czechoslovakia's second president, Masaryk having gone to his grave amid expressions of gratitude and veneration and grief such as few statesmen have ever earned. On each of those four occasions I “got something out of” Benes. And I hope he got something out of me—I can think of few men to whom I would rather be of use.

Some of the things told to me by President Benes, when I sat beside his desk in the Hradčany, are such as should put new life into our hopes for a better world after this war. Looking at me shrewdly, out of those bright eyes of his—in appearance as simple and rugged and close to the soil as any of the humble ancestors whose blood flows in his veins—he said:

“Europe is living and will for some time continue to live in an epoch of upheavals, revolutions, and violent changes of internal régime. *But it would be absurd to imagine that she is passing wholesale into a state of some permanent form of dictatorship signifying a new life, a new historical era, a new world outlook. . . .*

“The ultimate system, in my opinion, will be a new and more perfect type of democracy, which will have in each state its own particular character and development. . . .

“It is a historical fact of general applicability that *a dictatorship by its very essence is a temporary régime*, more transitional

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in character than a democracy, and that its temporary character is determined by two factors: the personality of the dictator for the time being, and the impossibility for any society to live beyond a certain period under a régime where liberty is lacking. . . .”

Turning from consideration of nations in general, President Benes said something which today—six years later—is calculated to bring solace and encouragement to his oppressed fellow-Czechs:

“The Czechoslovak nation has a historical tradition of democracy. Our national character cannot bear and will not bear dictatorship. It is opposed to all mechanical discipline, all discipline lacking moral justification, and would revolt against it.”

As I think of my four talks with Eduard Benes, I think of Czech patriotism. And, as I think of Czech patriotism, I think of an afternoon in Prague when I heard a Czech orchestra play a certain Czech tone poem by one of the most famous Czech composers—*Vltava*, by Smetana.

That tone poem traces the course of the Vltava (never call it *Moldau*, as the Germans do, if you are speaking to a Czech!) as it flows for hundreds of miles over the Czechoslovak countryside. First, in ripples of elfin melody, we hear of its humble birth among the Bohemian mountains; then we are told of its steady growth as it flows amid fields and villages; then we have its proud progress beneath the stately bridges of Prague past the towering Hradčany; until, finally, we see it in magnificent fulfillment, as a mighty stream—revealed to us by the composer with sonorous harmonies, in a flashing glory of sound.

As Smetana visualized the Vltava, so the Czechs visualize the story of their homeland—its groping beginnings, its sturdy

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development, its emergence into the splendor of democracy and freedom. They think of that homeland as their life, their soul, their past, their present, their future—all of them, laborers and peasants, officials and officers, businessmen, professional men, prominent and lowly, rich and poor.

And all of them, after bowing in reverence to grand old Masaryk, resting in his grave, turn in trustful hope to him into whom Masaryk's spirit has passed—to Eduard Benes—who for years toiled far into the night on the Hradčany, with the Vltava flowing majestically below—who now toils, with like tenacity, in exile, ignoring adversity and defying heartache.

For two things Czechoslovakia may thank God: for the fact that Thomas Masaryk, in his old age, with his great work of liberation done, did not see his native land pass from freedom to tribulation; and for the good luck through which it still has Eduard Benes, in the full vigor of manhood, to lead it from tribulation back to the freedom which, a quarter of a century ago, he helped Masaryk to bestow upon it.

In London I valiantly strode up to France's Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand, as he was crossing the lobby of the Hyde Park Hotel. Our ambassador in London at that time was Alan-son B. Houghton, famous for the care and taste and opulence with which he dressed. Like all the other American newspapermen in London, I knew that Mr. Houghton had been closeted for hours in world-shaking conferences with Monsieur Briand—and none of us had been able to find out exactly what they had said to each other. So resolutely stopping the brilliant Frenchman in his progress across the lobby, I inquired—throw-into the sentence as much French as I could muster on such short notice:

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"What can you tell me about your talk with Ambassador Houghton?"

"Il avait une très belle boutonnière," answered Briand—opening and closing the shortest interview I ever got.

But the best of all my interviews was with a citizen of prominence in the New York of my early days in journalism, when I was a chronically broke cub reporter on the New York Times Sunday Magazine. He was a man with strong views on something. I haven't the vaguest recollection what it was or what his views on it were—anyhow, they were strong. He said to me:

"I will *not* give you an interview. But I *will* write an article for the Times—free of charge."

In a few days the article arrived. It ran to five full columns. The Sunday Editor, being a just man, ruled that, since I had been instrumental in obtaining that article, I was entitled to as much money for it as if I had laboriously gouged it out of that prominent personage, word for word, in the form of an interview.

Five columns. Seven dollars per column. Thirty-five dollars. No work on my part. Yes, that was the best interview I ever got.

Chapter XVII

"Stouter Than I Used to Be . . ."

My figure shows plainly the effect of the thousands of miles I have not walked. It shows with equal plainness the effect of the thousands of meals I have not refused. My failure to refuse many of those meals, I am delighted to recall, occurred in Paris. And I devoutly hope that the darkness now shrouding the City of Light will soon be lifted, that sorrow will soon be cleansed from Parisian hearts, that laughter will echo soon again along Parisian streets, that many opportunities will soon be afforded me to refuse flawless Parisian meals—and that those opportunities will be ignored by me with the same instantaneous decisiveness with which I have ignored them in the past!

Some years ago my figure swelled to such ampleness of contour and gave evidence of such vaulting ambitions for the future that stooping to pick up my handkerchief began to take on the attributes of a major operation. It really looked as if I were getting into Tommy Mett's class—and Vic's.

Both Tommy and Vic have been conspicuous, over a period of many years, for the mathematical progression of their waistlines. And each of them has been convinced, all through those years, that the other is much fatter. Once Vic encountered Tommy and commented on the number of pounds acquired by the latter around his middle since their last meeting. Tommy, fixing his eyes on Vic's central section, retorted:

"The idea! The pot calling the belly fat!"

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On one thing the two are agreed, however—that I am more voluminous than either of them.*

Finally, when my figure got so expansive that Walter Poor called it “duck-like,” my perturbation—and sensitiveness—became acute. Tommy Mett, running into me one day on Forty-Second Street, poked me rudely in the tummy, and asked:

“What are you going to call it?”

I floored him severely with this:

“The rational life for me! No more paunch! From now on I shall live up to my new slogan!”

“What slogan?” inquired Tommy, eyeing my waistline with absorption.

“A meal a mile.”

“What does it mean?”

“After every meal I’m going to walk a mile.”

I didn’t see Tommy again for six months. As soon as he laid eyes on me, he inquired:

“How’s that a-meal-a-mile contest of yours getting along?”

“Not very well,” I admitted lugubriously. “The meals lead by 500!”

Tommy roared. The nerve of him! He is and has been for uncounted years the fatter of the two of us. Some day I may write a book about certain rotund friends of mine. It will go into voluminous and intimate details concerning their middles. Possibly it will have a few allusions—quite cursory and brief—concerning my own middle. But I won’t let such unimportant digressions deflect me from the main course of my narrative—from the meat of the matter, in other words. So far I have got no further than the title of this dream-work of the future—*Around the Waist in Eighty Inches*.

* Piffle!

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I like good food. I like good food of any kind. I like good food in any country. I like good food best when it is cheap. I like it next best when it is medium-priced. And when it is high-priced, I scrabble around trying to get together enough money—or obtain the necessary invitation from friends better situated financially—to consume it *quand même*, while devoutly praying that, before too long a time elapses, I can find the same sort of food cheaper, or the same sort of friend in a similarly generous mood.

Much have I traveled in the realms of food. And my travels have taught me this: *Not all expensive food is good; but most good food is expensive.* That's an unpalatable truth—but it's true. Good food is like big game; you have to stalk it. I don't know which American in the Paris of pre-war days was the more foolish: the one who always ate high-priced French food because he said he found all cheap French food bad or the one who always ate cheap French food because he said he never found high-priced French food good.

"Tommy Ybarra talks about food the way other men talk about women," I overheard Penny remark one day to her sister Peggy—who says of herself, "I have never been in Ireland and never been out of it." *

"Did you ever notice Tommy's voice when he gets to praising meals he has eaten in Paris?" continued Penny. "It's a hushed voice. Soulful. Do you want me to prove what I say?"

"Go ahead," said Peggy.

"Tommy!"

I knocked off work in a near-by room where I was operating my "tripewriter."

"Yes?"

* That goes for Penny, too.

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"Will you come here a minute?"

I joined Penny and Peggy. Nothing pleases me so much when I am working as to be interrupted.

"Imagine," Penny said to me, "that you have not had a meal in Paris for a whole year. Are you imagining that?"

"I am."

"Now say *rognons sautés au madère*."

"*Rognons sautés au madère*."

"Now say *navarin d'agneau*."

"*Navarin d'agneau*."

Penny turned triumphantly to Peggy.

"There! Didn't I tell you? Wouldn't you think that was something out of *Romeo and Juliet*?"

Raptly I chanted:

"*It was the navarin and not the lark*."

Penny squealed with joy. Again she turned to Peggy.

"Can you beat it? Marvelous! Why, Juliet wouldn't have a chance! All Tommy would have to do, if he wanted to make a conquest, would be to take her to dinner at his favorite restaurant and whisper the menu in her ear. She would be his before the third oyster!"

I looked severely at Penny.

"How you run on!" I remarked in a cold voice designed to stop her stream of disrespectful banter—in which, I reflected uncomfortably, there was much truth.

I am, I know perfectly well, a gourmet beyond hope of reform. I am what Ralph Graves used to call a "G. W."—which stands not for George Washington but for gut-worshipper. (Ralph told Penny his name for me, and she was delighted. She implied distinctly that it fitted me to perfection.)

But I must confess here and now, at the risk of being frowned

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upon for lèse-Uncle Sam, that the major part of my gastro-nomic enjoyment has not been supplied by the restaurants of my native United States.

There are good things to eat in this country's restaurants, but not enough of them. There are good chefs in this country, but not enough of them. There are good gourmets in this country, but not enough of them. If there were enough good American gourmets, they would assassinate most American chefs, burn most American restaurant food in a bonfire, proceed to raise a new race of American chefs, and then let them loose, each with a *cordon bleu* around his neck and a *carte blanche* in his hand, on a campaign to create a genuine school of American cuisine. Somebody once insisted to me that what Patrick Henry really said was “Give me liberty or give me death—but, of the two, I prefer liberty.” What I say is: “Give me death or give me average American food—but, of the two, I prefer death!” That's pretty extreme, I know—but then, you see, I've just been eating hamburgers.

Years ago I used to declare disagreeably: “The only Americans who eat really well are those who eat in Paris!” Today I declare: “No Americans eat really well because they can't eat in Paris!” Oh, I'm a nasty customer when it comes to talking about the food of my native land—but then, you see, I am just back from a lecture tour which put me in possession of a sad but incontrovertible fact: in the restaurants of our Middle West and Far West and Pacific Coast “hot” meals fall into one of four categories: lukewarm, cool, cold, or stone-cold.

In the Europe that I knew—the Europe of the twenty years before and the twenty years after the First World War—acute observers were already professing to find steady deterioration in European cuisine. They were detecting signs of this long

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before the world began to talk glibly of the standardization of life.

After standardization began to snoop up on us they were heartbroken. Good food, they groaned, was doomed to extinction. Standardization, they wailed—reaching out, octopus-like, to throttle as many signs as possible of individuality—was now laying clammy tentacles on the noble art of high cuisine.

Unmistakable traces of sameness, of deadly and damnable sameness, they averred, were to be detected in the cooking of Paris and Vienna, Rome and Naples, Madrid, Moscow and New York. "If the culinary art continues down-grade," they sobbed, "there will eventually be no telling a Hungarian goulash from an Irish stew, a Dover sole from a Long Island flounder, the sauce *béarnaise* served with an entrecôte in Paris from the sauce accompanying a shashlik in Moscow or a mess of spaghetti in Milan!"

The best that can be said for today's cooking is that here and there it remains as good as the cooking of yesterday. No gourmet of our epoch will maintain that he can eat better than his father or grandfather. Wherever there is a change in culinary quality, he will insist that it is a change for the worse.

Before the present war this was getting to be true to some extent even of France, home of the world's best meals. Even in that sacrosanct temple of gastronomy, Paris, and in those realms of savor and succulence, the French provinces, whence innumerable classical and delicious dishes have sallied forth to the conquest of the world's palate, the chill touch of uniformity was making itself felt.

"Paris food is not what it used to be!" was the lament of gloomy epicures who for years had followed the motto: "Man should not eat to live but live to eat." Others of the same

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brotherhood, returning from trips of exploration undertaken to run to earth awful rumors that things were not as they should be in provincial Gastronomica, were murmuring in tones of extreme sadness, around sidewalk tables at Parisian boulevard cafés:

"Yes, my boy, I have just been in Marseilles. Gone, lost forever, is the secret of bouillabaisse Marseillaise!" Or: "What a dreadful day, my friend, was the one I spent in Caen! Waiter, a double brandy! I propose to drink myself to death! In Caen they can no longer stew tripe!"

Yet, in the very midst of the profanation of their gods, the gourmets were deriving some consolation from the thought that, even if the cooking of all other lands should become standardized, there would still be Frenchmen fighting the battle of high cuisine; that, even if every other town hitherto renowned for distinctive food should succumb to sameness, Paris would still be gallantly flaunting, in the face of the robots of standardization, the tattered banner of culinary individualism.

In the Paris that I knew—that countless other Americans knew—the foreign visitor could still get dishes which, though compounded of the flesh of lowly cattle or sheep, lamb or poultry, pig or rabbit, were made by those compounding them into ambrosia. He could still wash these delicacies down with beverages which, though concocted from the humble grape, were transformed by their skilful concoctors into nectar.

If he went along the Avenue de l'Opéra to a certain little side street and turned into it and walked a few more yards, he would find a restaurant serving the best kidneys in the universe—or, if not the best, at least the richest. If he sought the same avenue and turned into another side street, he would find a place where *hors d'oeuvres* were provided in a profusion and

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variety and excellence that could not be surpassed even in Sweden, where what you eat before actually beginning your meals is more important than the meals themselves.

In days of the past when I really knew Paris (knew it, that is, as well as a mere foreigner was ever permitted by its French proprietors to know it), I would steal away now and then from haunts on the right bank of the Seine to a restaurant on the left bank and there regale myself with *crêpes Suzette*, which, in the realm of the pancake, are princes of the blood royal. Winking slyly at friends just arrived from America on their first trip to Europe, I would deflect their course from the rue Saint-Honoré, in the heart of the foreign quarter of Paris, to a little thoroughfare which (but for me) they would never have found, elbow them into an unobtrusive eating-house which (were it not for me) they would never have entered, and press upon them a heavenly creation of melted cheese which (had they never made my acquaintance) would never have set them humming paeans of purest gastronomic bliss. And, of course, I knew where to find the king of broiled soles and the queen of chickens roasted on the spit. And I would tell a newly arrived American friend that, whereas I used to believe that the best steaks in the world were to be found in the United States, they were now but a tradition there, on account of the growth of the cold-storage idea.

"I care not who eats my country's cold-storage steaks," I used to say, "provided I don't." And I would add: "My boy, follow me."

And I would cross the Place Vendôme, stride masterfully down the Rue de la Paix, turn to the left, and introduce my friend to a place where the cook had had his portrait painted by a celebrated artist, and the head waiter looked like a duke,

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and where the steaks made you want to spend the next twenty-four hours forgiving your worst enemies one by one. (At that time I thought those steaks the best in the world—but that was before I had been to the Argentine.)

And, of course, as an American connoisseur of Paris, I knew all about Frédéric and his duck.

Once upon a time there was a French chef called Frédéric. One day he eyed a duck severely and said: “Come here, duck. I have an inspiration.” And Frédéric killed that duck and cooked it according to a recipe which had been whispered to him, to the accompaniment of celestial music, while he lay dreaming in bed. Then he served that duck to a friend. Forthwith that friend went mad with joy.

Frédéric served thousands of other ducks, cooked in the same way, until, loaded down with fame and riches, he died. But his restaurant lived on, and his conquering way with ducks was preserved as the restaurant’s holiest tradition. And gourmets from all over the world went there and reverently ate duck and reverently sipped Burgundy and reverently breathed a prayer for the repose, well-merited, of Frédéric’s soul.

Yes, delights of gastronomy were still to be found in the Paris of before the present war, even though this decadent age of ours was already suffering from creeping standardization. And dishes fit for the gods were still being eaten in little places hidden away in narrow streets of French provincial towns, or in modest French roadside inns, which, judging from their appearance, could hardly serve anything more elaborate than a ham sandwich. But the gourmet living in those first years of the age of standardization could not help asking himself: “Is the same sacred fire still burning in the breasts of the chefs of today? Will not the uniformity stealthily overspreading food,

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even some French food (did you ever, in Paris, having decided that it was too rainy to go to a restaurant, try the table d'hôte dinner at your hotel?) eventually debauch the last uncontaminated French chef, strangle the last unimpaired culinary tradition, cause the suicide—on the threshold of his favorite restaurant—of the last unreconstructed gourmet?"

While I was wandering over pre-war Europe, Voisin's closed its door in Paris. Despairing gourmets surely must have killed themselves on its threshold; and the police, having removed their bodies in silence, doubtless hushed up the matter lest it drive other gourmets to self-immolation. Paillard's, too, folded up and stole away to wherever Parisian restaurants go when they die (I once partook there of a consommé which has remained enshrined in my memory as the Ultima Thule of soup). And on the premises where Prosper Montagné had cooked and served dishes which would have sent Brillat-Savarin into ecstasies, I sadly contemplated an ordinary corner café, with stained tables and a cheap bar and a patron with a dirty white apron! If, even in France, traces of the cloven hoof of standardization were to be found in the country's cuisine, as far back as the era after the First World War, just imagine what was happening in other lands whose inhabitants had never paid to culinary tradition the reverence which was second nature to the French.

At mention of English cuisine, most gourmets will stuff their napkins into their mouths and shake with helpless laughter. Theirs is the attitude of Talleyrand, who, when an English lady said to him: "But, monsieur, you must acknowledge that we English have the finest sauce," retorted: "You need it, Madame, for you have the worst cooking."

Such gourmet extremism, however, in the Europe that I

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knew, was only partly justified. One could eat excellently in the England of the years when Old Pa Rolling Stock frequently visited her—though it must be admitted that the excellence resided more in the raw materials used than in the culinary skill applied to them. Who, in a mood to welcome gastronomic simplicity, would ask better than a slice of the roast beef of Old England? Who, having found a genuine English mutton chop, would quest further? Whose mouth would fail to water when he scented the approach of a crisply broiled Dover sole?

Yet in England also the standardization of food was raising its dreadful head. Many years ago the people of the British Isles discovered the advantages to their pocketbooks of meat from far-distant parts of the vast British Empire—safeguarded from decay, ere undertaking its long journey of thousands of miles, by being frozen in accordance with the most modern methods. The day of that discovery was a good day for British pocketbooks and a bad day for British cuisine. Only too often, in the years that followed it, did a diner realize that what was masquerading as the roast beef of Old England was, in reality, the frozen beef of New Zealand; only too often did he ruefully suspect that the meat which he was paying for as extraordinary Southdown mutton came from ordinary South Australian sheep.

Apropos of English cuisine, I want to tell a story about Spanish food. When I was New York Times Correspondent in London, Fitz Minnigerode and I used to like to eat lunch at a Spanish restaurant of considerable merit, situated on a thoroughfare near Piccadilly Circus, which had, it seems to me, a most appropriate name for a thoroughfare with an eating-house on it: Swallow Street. We became friendly with the staff of

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that restaurant, from Señor Martínez, the boss, right down past the head waiter and the waiters to the coat-room attendant—that is, we were as friendly as anybody can ever get with anyone connected with a coat room.

One day Fitz and I learned that King Alfonso XIII, who was visiting the British royal family (he hadn't fallen out with them so seriously yet as to be denied the entrée to Buckingham Palace), had graciously consented to lunch at the restaurant of Señor Martínez. The Señor promised to tip us off as to exactly when Alfonso was coming, in order that we two citizens of a great democracy might be enabled to chew and swallow in close proximity to a king.

Señor Martínez kept his promise. Fitz and I found ourselves installed within a scone's throw of Alfonso. And then, it seems to me, was when I gave really convincing proof that I knew my way around in Gastronomía.

"What do you wish to eat?" asked the waiter.

"What is King Alfonso eating?" I inquired.

"*Cocido a la española.*"

"Bring me *cocido a la española.*"

"What do you wish to drink?"

"What is King Alfonso drinking?"

"*Rioja Moraima.*"

"Bring me *Rioja Moraima.*"

And Germany? Pre-Hitler Germany, though prolific of heavy-handed cooks and conspicuous rather for quantity than quality of food, nevertheless had a distinctive school of cuisine. Where was better partridge to be eaten? Or venison? Germany also had an exacting phalanx of gourmets. Often they derived, to be sure, the keenest of their gastronomic joys from French dishes and French wines—but they felt, at the same time, no



*"My Street in Seville" though name on the sign refers neither
to T. R. Y. or any relative*

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need to scorn viands essentially Teutonic in character and vintages living up to the golden tradition of Rhine and Moselle.

In Hohenzollern days you could see, ensconced in any one of half a dozen Berlin restaurants, diners whose skulls and frames were unmistakably those of Prussian Junkers, yet whose delicately flushed complexion and network of little purple lines around their nostrils proclaimed them gourmets of Parisian discernment. Before them would be some savory masterpiece of cookery, beside them a dusty bottle of wine. Food and drink might be specialties either of France or Germany, but one thing was certain: both must needs be perfect of their kind. This was proved by the judicial expression of those gourmets' features as they took the first bite and sip—by the apprehensive look on the face of the head waiter as he stood nervously awaiting the judge's verdict.

But now those gourmets are dead along with the pre-war generation to which they belonged. And, long before Hitler became Der Fuehrer, the new generation in Germany tended to scoff at high cuisine and rare vintages. Whereas, in the old days, the son of a Junker of that stamp would have followed in the footsteps of his father, concealing (in case he was himself no gourmet) the evidences of his gastronomic ignorance, he was content, when I lived in Berlin, to shovel down whatever food was set before him and confine most of his drinking to that undoubtedly excellent but undeniably plebeian beverage, beer.

One reason for this was that most of the Germans of the era after the First World War could not afford really good food and wine. Another (so observers in that Germany would tell you) was that many Germans of the new generation were going in hard for sports. An active afternoon at sports makes

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a man hungry but not epicurean. What he wants in his food and drink, after football or tennis or rowing or hiking, is solidity not exquisiteness—nourishment not art.

Hence the ever-increasing degree of standardization in German cooking. Why, in Berlin, in the 1920's and 1930's, they actually had a typical American quick lunch place, which did a good business handing out standardized hash and sausages and coffee!

Italy in those same 1920's and 1930's had not succumbed to standardization in her national cuisine. The average foreigner thinks of spaghetti as a thing without nuances of any sort, a mere mass of macaroni. But he is wrong. What a diversity there is in spaghetti! What a difference between the sauce served with it in Lombardy and the sauce favored by the Romans and the sauce to be found in perfect form only in Naples. Shame upon the foreigner who thinks that good eating in Italy is limited to spaghetti! Let him savor *risotto*, as concocted in Milan—or *fritto mare*, as scooped up out of the sea around Venice, and served, lavish and succulent, in a certain open-air Venetian restaurant, with the plashing of a peaceful canal for accompaniment and the soft glow of colored electric lights to sharpen gastronomic enjoyment.

Standardized, such Italian delights certainly were not in the pre-Mussolini days—nor will they have been entirely standardized, it is safe to say, after Italy has recovered from her fit of Fascism and resumed her honored place in the fair domain of Touristia. But, in another direction—from the culinary point of view—Italy was (and may be again) the most standardized land in the world. Nowhere was the average hotel table d'hôte meal so monotonous, so undistinguished, so unrelieved, so hopeless, as in the Italy of my Europe!

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Once, I remember, when I was waiting in a Naples deluged with rain and gloom for a steamer to take me back to New York, I wrote to a friend: "Well, I must finish this letter; it's time to go down to the dining room and see what the damned fools have done to the veal!"

So I went down. And I looked coldly at the veal, and the veal looked coldly at me—which was the only way it could possibly look. And I said to the head waiter:

"Have you any wine that is not sour?"

"Why, of course!" he answered, greatly offended. "We have much wine that is not sour."

"Well, bring me a bottle of wine that is not sour," I ordered.

"I go at once to bring the *signore* a bottle of wine that is not sour," he sang enthusiastically. And he brought me a bottle of wine that was sour.

Spain? Well, if Spanish cuisine is destined to become standardized, gourmets will pray fervently that it be *away* from genuinely Spanish standards. Spain, in the between-the-world-wars epoch, was a most marvelous land—the most rewarding of all, in more than one way, to the American tourist. But it did *not* shine gastronomically.

Austria? In the pre-Hitler world one could still eat well in Vienna, despite all that had happened there since the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire. Nevertheless—well, four short words will suffice to show why Viennese gourmets were both mournful and apprehensive in the years when I most frequented their haunts: *Frau Sacher was dead*. Yes, Frau Sacher was no more—Frau Sacher, corpulent presiding genius of Sacher's restaurant—Frau Sacher of the cold boiled eye, of the big earrings, of the cigar between her lips, a cigar strong enough to satisfy a longshoreman.

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"Europe may change, but Sacher's never!" she had said in 1918, when Austria lay crushed in defeat, and a mob was rioting outside her place. And she had waddled out of her front door when the mob arrived and scolded it furiously for making such a noise. And the mob had laughed and cheered her loudly and moved on. And Frau Sacher, puffing angrily at her cigar, had gone back to continue serving to her customers the best food in Central Europe.

At about the time of Frau Sacher's death in Vienna, la mère Filloux died in Lyons—and, reading the news, epicures asked in gloomiest foreboding: "Will anybody in France or elsewhere ever cook chicken the way she did?" And, when la mère Poularde died in Mont Saint-Michel, they inquired, in mournful tones: "Will the secret of her omelet be buried with her—or has she passed on the torch?"

Having talked steadily for several pages about food, it seems to me that it behooves me now to place on record a certain dream which came to me one night after I had dined too well in the domain of Gastronomia. And there's another reason for my telling about that dream: as I leap from chapter to chapter I ask myself, "Is there enough self-revelation in this book? Doesn't it behoove an author to probe into his soul every once in a while for the benefit of his readers—at so much per reader? Doesn't it behoove him every so often to get after the secret places of his heart with an intellectual dredging-machine—at so much per dredge?"

Therefore, I shall tell about that dream in the hope that it has a hidden meaning, an eminently Freudian hidden meaning, which serious readers will seek with such earnestness that they will forget the long succession of pages without a solitary soul-probing or heart-dredging which I have wished upon them.

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I was in a beautiful medieval palace. The rooms were carved with exquisite Gothic ornaments. Tall candles were glistening. Fresh flowers abounded. In the great reception hall, with its high-domed ceiling and richly ornamented golden furniture and tapestried walls, stood many courtiers.

A herald blew his horn and announced the approach of the king.

The king entered in silk and satin, bowing right and left to the courtiers. He sat on a high dais. On his head was a golden crown. Just as he leaned over to greet an important visiting ambassador, who was being presented to him, a secret panel was pushed back, and three men in Robin Hood costumes stood in a secret doorway. Solemnly they raised a large keg of beer. Announcing "By Order of the Queen!" they sloshed the beer all over the king.

Disorder reigned in the royal court. Everybody protested volubly. They carried the beer-soaked king upstairs, where all his garments were changed.

The herald again announced to the waiting courtiers the arrival of the king. Again he appeared, dressed in shiny gold garments. He bowed to right and left. He ascended the dais. He sat on the throne, with the crown on his head.

Just as he was about to greet the same important ambassador, the same secret panel was again thrown back. The same three men in Robin Hood costumes stood in the same doorway behind the unsuspecting king.

"By Order of the Queen!" they said in unison. And again they sloshed a whole barrel of beer over the king.

This time the court was in a riot. Pandemonium reigned. Everyone talked at once.

Psychoanalysts and psychiatrists are invited to solve the

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meaning of that royal beer-sloshing. All contributions will be treated confidentially (I hope) and remain the sole property of the publisher. The winner will receive a free copy of this book and a few off-the-record remarks by me.

Yes, the voice of the pessimist is loud in the land of Gastronomica. He says that, after the war now raging has come to an end, even worse inroads will be made on the noble art of eating good food and the companion noble art of washing-it-down-with-good-drink. Even in France, he wails, culinary tradition has not remained so potent as to make it occur to any present-day French chef to kill himself (as the great Vatel is reputed to have done) because his employer objected to one of his sauces.

The pessimist is probably right. Even after one has stretched one's imagination to the utmost, one can hardly picture in a courtroom of today the following scene—which occurred (honestly and truly it did—a most veracious Frenchman told me so) in a French tribunal of yesteryear:

A famous French chef was up for murder. He was guilty. Of that there was no doubt.

"Why did you do it?" asked the judge.

"Your Honor, it was this way," explained the chef. "I had just been hired by a parvenu millionaire. I decided to show him that he had in his employ the greatest of all living chefs, the man who, above all others, was capable of cooking according to the finest traditions.

"So I prepared a soup. It was a masterpiece. It was the realization of all my dreams, the last word in culinary perfection. I placed that soup on my master's table. He entered the dining room. He took his seat.

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“Breathless—eagerly expectant—I stood behind his chair. I awaited his cry of joy, the flash of bliss in his eye. And, as he reached for the salt, I shot him dead.”

“Acquitted!” cried the judge.

Chapter XVIII

"From the Distant Panorama . . ."

CITIES have personalities. That fact struck a learned gentleman in Massachusetts some years ago. He forthwith called Boston "a tall, quiet, gray-haired man, lean and dignified." His idea of New York was "a bloated, rather uncouth man, self-centered and wrapped in a cloak of self-interest, pushing another aside at the ticket windows to see that he himself gets served first." Chicago seemed to him "thick-set, stockily built, breezy, loud and somewhat of a braggart, but affable, enthusiastic, and ready to help a fellow carry his burdens."

Those thumbnail sketches by the gentleman in Massachusetts set me to trying to do the same sort of thing myself.

I decided that New York had less breeding than Boston but more humanity; less affability than Chicago but more kindness. Finally, I summed up my conception of the personality of New York thus: "New York is a living skyscraper, with flesh of concrete, bones of steel, and heart of gold."

That pleased me. As a snarer of the personalities of cities in traps made of words, I began to think that I was pretty good. I started on a quest for the right phrase with which to hit off the personalities of European cities. Instantly I found that my task had become easier.

In Europe—I am speaking of the Europe of the years between the two world wars—differences of race and historical development and language, I soon realized, lent to cities a color

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and variety not possessed by their colleagues on this side of the Atlantic. One by one, I placed the cities of Europe which I knew best under the microscope of my mind.

Now Europe is engulfed by terrible war. Some of her fair cities are shattered and drab and melancholy. Joy has fled from the homes of millions of Europeans—bitter fears for the future have brought lines to their faces and listlessness to their gait.

I am going to talk about the Europe of yesterday—the Europe which will live again tomorrow—the real, the indestructible Europe. That Europe cannot die. After all, Europe has known many centuries of history, many forms of catastrophe. Dictators in Europe have come and gone—and more of them will come and go—but Europe will go on forever. Let others harp on the horror and terror now besetting Europe. I am going to write of the beauty and appeal of the Europe which is biding her time. The Europe that I knew and will know again—that I loved and love and shall forever love—is the real Europe.

Nazis are strutting across the Place de la Concorde. What of it? Let them strut and fret their brief hour. Bombs fall on London. Fascists swagger in Rome. Let those bombs fall and those Fascists swagger! The Paris of Nazis and the London of bombs and the Rome of Fascism will abide their destined hour. The Europe of today, with her tragedies and her aberrations, will bow down to the Europe of yesterday, with her basic realities. I salute the Europe of tomorrow, wrapped in the radiance of our hopes.

Paris is a beautiful woman. That will doubtless fill the bill for most people. For there is something essentially feminine about the capital of France; and everywhere within her pre-

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cincts the eye falls upon beauty in some form or other. Parisian men can be as hard-fisted and tough and hard-boiled as any males anywhere; yet the fact remains that their city, even if one were to fill its streets with nothing but veteran French soldiers of a hundred battles and veteran Apache gangsters of a hundred brawls, would retain an indefinable something of femininity. And what human being, however confident of his destructive powers, would dare to accept the contract for removing all the beauty from Paris? Not even Attila! Nor Hitler!

The beauty of Paris strikes the eye of the beholder at every turn. In no other city of the world is it to be found in such variety. Whether one is hungry for the beauty of the past, or for the beauty of the present, or even for the first buds of the beauty of the future, one will find in the French capital most bounteous aesthetic fare.

Walk along almost any Paris street for a few blocks. At one moment you will be gazing at a building from a bygone century whence come visions of noblemen in satin and periwigs, mincing of step and wicked of wit; whence trip the ghosts of beautiful ladies gorgeous in silk and headdress, on their way to make their curtsies to Louis XIV in a graceful minuet.

Or, mayhap, something will catch your eye that will whisk you into a later and terrible epoch which Paris knew not very long ago—that epoch when many such courtly cavaliers and charming ladies were dragged along this very street, amid the insults of a hate-maddened mob, to meet tragic death—on what is now the Place de la Concorde.

No square anywhere combines beauty and historical importance and personality better than the Place de la Concorde—"the most beautiful square in the world." Whoever would

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dispute this assertion must certainly bring strong arguments to bear for proving the contrary—arguments so strong as to dim, in the minds of those hearing them, that matchless view from the Concorde of the superb, upsweeping Avenue des Champs-Élysées, leading, in a crescendo of effect, to its climax at the triumphal arch of the Étoile; arguments so potent as to obscure the impression made on the beholder by the Egyptian obelisk, which, having shed glory on ancient Alexandria, now rears itself in unimpaired majesty over the loveliest city of modern times; arguments so appealing as to drive away the memory of the Seine, as seen from the Concorde, with the Chamber of Deputies brooding in Grecian severity across the bridge; and the memory of the graceful frontage of the Tuileries Gardens and the circle of statues representing the cities of France and the broad Rue Royale culminating in the noble façade of the Madeleine—the whole enlivened, when Paris was normal and happy, by unending streams of vehicles and ceaseless metropolitan noises, and by the French tricolor proudly flapping over splendid public buildings.

No other spot in Paris can oust the Place de la Concorde as the spot which, as soon as mentioned, connotes Paris alike to Frenchman and foreigner. In the midst of its hubbub in happy days of the past—which will return—side by side with obelisk and statues and broad radiating thoroughfares which have endowed it with its modern beauty, traditions cling to the Concorde which make it part and parcel of the history of France.

There the guillotine once lifted its grim outline. Where to-day taxicabs swirl past in a procession without end was "a marsh of blood" surrounding the spot where a king and a queen and many noblemen and noblewomen, as well as many of those

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who had brought them to their death, placed their heads on the block, amid the delighted howls of a multitude insatiable in its blood-lust. On one side of the Concorde stood the great Palace of the Tuileries—alive with memories of French kings and of Napoleon—burned to the ground by the mad crowd which held Paris in its grip after the collapse of the Second Empire in the Franco-German War.

The terrible beauty of yesterday. The gentle beauty of yesterday. Both haunt the street on which you are sauntering. And then suddenly you come to where that street is crossed by an up-to-date avenue—wide, clean, straight, lined with buildings radiating modernity—where motor cars pass ceaselessly, where traffic policemen gesticulate, where everything shouts of the present and nothing whispers of the past. And yet here, too, everything seems beautiful, for Paris the magician can bestow beauty even upon raw newness and noise and speed—and smile, while she waves her magician's wand, out of eyes dancing with feminine witchery.

Yes, Paris is a beautiful woman.

And London? How is one to put in a nutshell the personality of London?

Hm—not so easy. And yet London throbs with personality. It is in the very air of the place. The baffling quality of the personality of London is exceeded only by its pervasiveness.

London is a highly meritorious citizen. London is a conservative afflicted with incurable liberalism. London is a city filled with calm persons who call everything—yet find nothing—"extraordinary." London is a stage Englishman who keeps tumbling over the footlights into reality. London is—well, as

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far as one average American is concerned—London is something so complex yet at the same time so familiar that she frequently fails to externalize her personality at all.

Beyond doubt much of the personality of London lies in her wealth of historical and literary associations—more so than in the case of Paris. Paris, too, is fragrant with the perfume of the past; but to the delver into Paris yesterdays, her history, real or fictitious, seems always the handmaiden of her beauty and of her femininity. Now Paris wears the armor of Joan of Arc—now the rags of Esmeralda—now the laces of Madame de Pompadour—now the flounces of Manon Lescaut—now the ermine of Josephine Beauharnais—yet every time, whether she incarnates book or epoch, she remains first and foremost Paris the Beautiful.

Not so London.

London is of history and literature all compact; but of history and literature printed, much of it, with slovenliness, as it were; on cheap paper, between drab and uninviting covers. Yet what a storehouse of treasure and personality is the book of London to all who know how to burrow into its pages!

Paris is a glittering show window. London is a shop with an unpainted façade, an unlighted front room, a back room that is dark and dirty and dusty but filled with a stock beyond all price. London would rather have a stranger believe her ugly than persuade him that she is beautiful. She would rather hide to the end of time in a fog of misunderstanding than be revealed in the sunshine of self-advertisement. London is Dr. Johnson without Boswell.

And Rome? How is one to prison the personality of Rome into a sentence? Which Rome is the real Rome?

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Some will maintain that it is the Rome of ancient history, the proud capital of the Roman Empire—the Rome evoked by the Forum and the Arch of Trajan and the Baths of Caracalla. Others will champion medieval Rome, whose ghost still stalks, wrapped in a conspirator's cloak, from the dark rooms of crumbling palaces and across sinister byways, fit scenes for midnight murder.

Others will favor a later Rome, wrought of marble and resplendent in a coat of many-hued paint, with the soul of Raphael and the features of Michael Angelo and the morals of Benvenuto Cellini. Others will vote for the Rome of religion—of martyrs thrown to cruel lions in the Colosseum; of the vast halls of the Vatican and the stupendous dome of St. Peter's. And still others in quest of the quintessential Rome will cast their vote for the Rome of today—the city that has lived through the change and devastation of the ages yet still smiles in youth and glows in beauty.

A composite picture, if ever there was one!

The personality of Rome?—well, Rome is the glory of history and the majesty of religion miraculously incarnated in a man-of-the-world sipping vermouth outside a café. Rome is Augustus the Great hailing a taxicab to call on Gregory the Great. Rome is a man whose walk is that of a Roman Emperor, whose face is that of a Christian Pope, whose name is Eternity.

And Venice? Loveliness and sadness, dreams and decay. Palaces with dirt-caked walls and rotting foundations, boards across window openings, sagging floors and empty halls and rats peering out of mildewed darkness—in place of the grace and splendor of yesterday, when noble visitors, ruffed and pomaded, were brought to those very palaces in slender gon-

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dolas, to be received at the head of the grand marble stairway by a host and hostess garbed in silk and velvet, flanked by files of respectful servitors.

Ghosts of imperious Doges, seated in a superb apartment of state, signing decrees of death; ghosts of swaggering warriors of the great Venetian navy, pushing their way through throngs of civilians toward their ships, tied up to Venice's bustling waterfront; the ghost of a mighty arsenal where the sound of hammering is stilled forever, whence no more swords and pikes and cannon are poured forth to discomfit Genoese and Turks. Walls of rotting marble, washed by sluggish canals.

Venice! Venice is an island of stillness in a lagoon of death. Venice is the bride of the sea, forsaken by her fickle bridegroom, cut off without a penny by her kin of the land, upon whom she had scornfully turned her back in the days of her greatness and happiness. Venice is a melancholy lady bathed in salt tears.

In Moscow the center of the city's personality is the Red Square. To be sure, Moscow's traffic is at its liveliest in the great square before the Opera House, a few minutes' walk away. But no matter! Thought of in conjunction with the Red Square, the Opera House Square shrinks into what it really is, despite all its bustle and modernity—a mere adjunct to one of the most original, impressive, and colorful open spaces in any city in the whole world.

You enter the Red Square through an archway before which is the Shrine of the Iberian Virgin, holiest of all Russian shrines. Emerging from the arch, you are overwhelmed by a view such as no other square can offer.

On one side is the bewildering mass of the Kremlin—a huddle

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of palaces, churches, barracks, gilded cupolas, soaring steeples, battlemented walls, towering gateways. Ahead of you—incredibly fantastic, fabulously unreal, a thing straight out of the *Thousand and One Nights*—is the Cathedral of St. Basil, painted in all the hues of the rainbow, a fit abode for every breed of supernatural genii. Ivan the Terrible built it. The legend persists that when it was finished he summoned the architect and had his eyes put out with red-hot irons. "He must never build another building as beautiful as that," explained Ivan the Terrible.

Moscow is the Orient shackled by the Occident. Moscow is the Occident fettered by the Orient. Moscow's Red Square is the Orient pushing westward in defiance of Occidental fetters and shackles.

As I look back on eighteen consecutive months as a resident of pre-Hitler Berlin, I realize that it is far easier to tell what that metropolis was not than to tell what it was.

Berlin was a metropolis without being a capital. Berlin had splendid art museums, yet she had never incarnated German art. Berlin had always attracted to herself the best musical conductors and the best orchestras—she had a spacious and venerable opera house—she had built for herself other opera houses which gave performances in constant competition with the famous temple of music erected by Frederick the Great on Unter den Linden—yet she did not incarnate German music. Most of her citizens had high respect for Goethe and Schiller—yet they had failed to make their city typify German literature.

To breathe the spirit of German art one had to go elsewhere

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in Germany. The ghosts of Goethe and Schiller roved not over Berlin but over Weimar. The shade of Immanuel Kant, returning to earth in the shadowy lineaments of Pure Reason, haunted not pushing Berlin but sleepy Koenigsberg. And what of German music? Away from Berlin one had to go, despite Berlin's great concert halls and opera houses, away to Bayreuth and Munich—or even out of Germany entirely, to Vienna—if one would fully understand German music as revealed by Wagner or Beethoven.

Even in the realm of materialism, where one might suppose that Berlin would surpass all German rivals, the Prussian metropolis seemed lacking in really commanding traits of personality. One day amid the smoky cities of the Ruhr—even in the era of German industrial exhaustion immediately after the First World War—one day, even then, among the Ruhr's gigantic factories, in the hellish din of their machinery and the hellish glare of their blast furnaces, did more to reveal the latent brute strength of industrialized Germany than a month in Berlin, amid the offices and agencies and banks which expressed that Germany to the rest of the world.

It was from Hamburg that the menacing Germany of the years before the First World War spread the tentacles of her shipping over the seas; and it was again from Hamburg that, despite crushing defeat in the war, the heirs of that Germany diligently sought to spread them again. It was from Bremen that the *Bremen* and the *Europa* sailed in the era that preceded the Second World War—speedier than any other ships, harbingers of another sinister Germany of aggression. And, while those great ships and others sailed into and out of Hamburg or Bremen, the Berliners—far from the sea, with no whiff of salt

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air in their nostrils—flocked greedily to buy and sell the shares of Hamburg and Bremen shipping concerns on the Berlin Stock Exchange.

In the Berlin of the pre-Hitler days Germany's imperial past still echoed. But, I repeat, it was away from Berlin that one had to go to sense something like the real personality of a German city.

Munich? "Munich" (I would have said) "is a red-faced individual with a fat paunch, who guzzles beer and loves art, gobbles sausages and adores music."

Hamburg? "Hamburg is a grizzled sea captain with the mind of a Rothschild and the vision of a Columbus."

Weimar? "Weimar is. . . ."

Frankfort? "Frankfort is. . . ."

Always *is*, you will notice, instead of the *is not* that invariably leaps to mind in connection with Berlin. Surely, *some* positive assertion can be made with regard to the personality of Berlin.

Let me see . . . how about this:

"Berlin is Bismarck without Beethoven."

And that calls to mind instantly the counterbalancing statement: "Vienna is Beethoven without Bismarck."

Always Vienna has laughed at the Germany of efficiency and martial aggressiveness and unsmiling vigor and deadly purposefulness. Today, stripped of the pomp of empire that was hers before the war—enslaved to tyrannical Nazi Germany—she stands more than ever as the incarnation of all that is light in Teutonism, of all that is grace in her heritage from a German ancestry.

Vienna's imperial magnificence has been snatched from her. Her Hapsburg emperors have gone, taking away with them

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ceremonial court and glittering retinue. Vienna, capital of the Hapsburg empire, has perished. Franz Josef is dead; but Franz Schubert lives on.

Vienna's delightful personality has as its soul the Stefansplatz. The first sight offered there to the gaze of visitors is the cathedral, the Stefans-Dom—beautiful, venerable, historical. It is the visible incarnation of traditions that are woven into every Austrian's innermost being.

Past its portals or through those portals has marched all the pageantry of Austrian history; its aisles are haunted by the ghosts of dead monarchs and deeds that cannot die.

From its great tower, rising high over the city's roofs, Count Starhemberg, Vienna's heroic defender, gazed daily over the flat plain stretching to the far horizon, hoping that aid would come at last from Christian Europe to drive away the Turks pounding at the city's gates. And aid did come at last, led by doughty John Sobieski, King of Poland; and Starhemberg bowed his head in grateful prayer, and the Turks were flung headlong to the east whence they had come, and the bells of the Stefans-Dom pealed in tumultuous thanksgiving.

From the square before the cathedral radiate three of the busiest streets in Vienna—the Kärntnerstrasse, flanked by handsome shops; the Rothenthurmstrasse, cutting squarely through the oldest part of the city; and the Graben, built, as the name implies, on the site of a moat of centuries ago. Thus the Stefansplatz can well vie with the Place de la Concorde, for, like the Concorde, it is rich in beauty and in historical significance and in modern bustle. It is not so beautiful as its proud Parisian rival, nor so animated—but in tradition it is richer. For, despite memories of Revolution and Commune, the Place de la Concorde cannot be said to epitomize the his-

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tory of France; but in the Stefansplatz is the embodiment of all Austria's splendor, or all her misfortune.

There, if you deny yourself for a moment to the present age, you will see the Empress Maria Theresa sweeping past in imperial splendor; and the soldiers of Napoleon marching to Wagram and Austerlitz; and Franz Schubert and his friends straggling homeward, shouting rollicking songs, from a revel in a tavern overshadowed by the cathedral tower; and Beethoven plodding along, savagely silent, hands behind his back, the unwritten music of one of his symphonies thundering through his brain. And, woven into the whole, radiating deviltry, robbing what is sad of its melancholy, you will hear the lilt of that which is Vienna incarnate, Vienna yesterday, Vienna today, Vienna tomorrow—a waltz by Johann Strauss.

The splendor of the funeral procession which followed old Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary through the streets of Vienna is already a dead memory. But the strains of the funeral march of Beethoven—written in the Vienna of the Hapsburgs and played a century later when the dead emperor was borne through the black-draped streets of his capital—still sounds in our ears, as grandly deathless as ever.

The Viennese of a quarter of a century ago, impoverished by war and by the aftermath of war, still raised their glasses, filled with the sparkling wine of Grinzing, in gay toasts to their worries and trolled rollicking songs about their troubles.

Vienna! A penniless minstrel who struts though threadbare, who laughs though shivering, who sings though starving. Vienna! A down-at-heel princess who has lost everything but her smile.

Hail Vienna! Hail, home of eternal lightness of touch and

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lightness of wit and lightness of heart! A city with a personality like yours can never die—for, if she could, the light of the sun and the light of the stars and the very light of beauty herself might perish from our earth!

Chapter XIX

"We Sail the Ocean Blue . . ."

FROM Bill Chenery and Charley Colebaugh, respectively Editor and Managing Editor of Collier's, I got two big surprises during the years of my job as European Editor of that sheet.

The bigger of the two was when they informed me that I was to take time out from Europe in order to discourse in print about the one and only country which I had not considered as a possible guinea pig for journalistic experiments, viz., my own. So I returned to New York from Europe and rushed through Cleveland and Chicago and Milwaukee and St. Louis and Cincinnati and Louisville and Philadelphia. As I rushed, I assiduously gathered information about that (to me) comparatively unfamiliar tribe, my fellow-Americans.

Finally, wan and disheveled from over-travel, I reached Philadelphia, my last stop before my reappearance in New York. I sat down to sort out my American notes. Whereupon Penny—whom I had left in Manhattan and who, I had supposed, would stay put there—suddenly arrived in Philadelphia, crashed through all barriers such as front-office clerks and elevator starters and bell-boys, and presented herself, in accordance with her impulsive and efficient code of behavior, at the door of my hotel room, with an imperious where-shall-we-dine look in her dancing blue eyes. I postponed my American Notes.

The second big Chenery-Colebaugh surprise was sprung on

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me while I was summering at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, on the Basque Coast of France, in the intervals of covering European assignments for Collier's.

These assignments had dyed me deeply with the dye of Europe; and I felt sure that, whatever assignments Bill and Charley might have in store for me in the immediate future, would dye me deeper still. At that time, in fact, I was about as European as I ever got in my whole much be-Europed career. Europe was banked high around me.

A few miles away, at Guéthary, Tommy Mett (now a respectable husband), with Libby, his wife, and four young children, was also wallowing luxuriantly in Europe. He used to invite Penny and me, with great cordiality, to visit Guéthary as frequently as possible. As a leading inducement, he offered to show himself in a new black-and-yellow bathing suit which, he averred, fit his globular figure like the skin of a grape.

"I look like a bumble-bee," he told us.

To reciprocate Guéthary hospitality, Penny and I constantly pressed Tommy and his wife to come over to Saint-Jean-de-Luz on the tram (now defunct) which ran along the shore of the Bay of Biscay. Once, as our guests, they partook of *chipirons*—cuttle fish in inky liquid, a favorite Basque delicacy—which I admired, Tommy tolerated, Penny disliked, and Libby detested. It was all very European—and I was sure it was all going to become even more so.

But into the midst of our little corner of the Old World came a cable from Charley. It informed me that I was to pack up, return to New York, and prepare for a trip to—

"Where do you suppose?" I asked Penny.

"Bulgaria."

"Guess again."

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"Bessarabia."

"No."

"I give up."

"South America!"

So Penny and I abandoned Europe and steamed into New York harbor and steamed out again on the *Western Prince*—torpedoed a few years later by a German U-boat. For the first time, both of us despite our previous variegated travels, crossed the Equator. We knew well what that meant for novices, being versed in the traditions of the sea.

Penny tried to bluff her way out.

"I've been around the world," she told the skipper of the *Western Prince* (here she spoke the truth). "So, of course, I've crossed the damned thing." (Here she lied.)

The captain of the *Western Prince* fixed upon Penny a hard-boiled eye.

"At what place were you across the Equator?" he asked, in dangerously honeyed accents.

"Soerabaya, Java," lied Penny blithely.

"Ha, indeed? How very interesting. And at what hotel did you stay in Soerabaya?"

"At—at—the Imperial," announced Penny, in reckless improvisation.

"There's no such place!" snapped the skipper. "Throw her to the sharks!"

So Penny and I were obliged to put on bathing suits and submit to much insulting treatment. Penny had kippered her-ring (very high) rubbed on her bathing togs to such an extent that she declared, a week later in Rio, that she could still smell it. And a powerful youth, who had crossed the Equator at an earlier date—or, at least, said he had—leaned over me, as I lay

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helpless on something painfully like an operating table, and inquired solicitously:

"What is your first name?"

"Thomas," I replied, opening my mouth wide.

"Well, here is something nice for you, Thomas," he said—and he thrust into it a sponge soaked in vinegar. After that, Penny and I—at the behest of King Neptune, a gigantic American fellow-passenger, who, when he wasn't reigning over the ocean, worked for Armour & Co. in Uruguay—were perched on chairs, which were suddenly tipped over backward when we least expected it. This caused us to fall in most undignified fashion into the ship's swimming pool, amid stentorian hilarity from scores of heartless wretches lined up on all sides.

After we had arrived in Rio, we were tumbled about by the surf on Copacabana Beach, and we played roulette in the gambling rooms hidden in the bowels of the Copacabana Hotel, where—as usual—I lost and Penny won. Her winnings, she proudly informed me, were to be devoted intact to buying a present for Peggy.

At Mar del Plata, in the Argentina, she added to her profits, while I again lost my shirt. But at Viña del Mar, in Chile, the management of the Casino nicked her for a multitude of Chilean pesos, causing her to squeal in anguish and making a serious dent in the shekels earmarked at Copacabana and Mar del Plata for Peggy. However, when we got to Lima, there was enough still left for the purchase of an impressive vicuña rug. Incidentally, that word *Copacabana* is Penny's linguistic Nemesis. She can never get it right. She calls it either *Copacovadonga* or *Copacapablanca*.

On that trip, my South American self, who had been living in grouchy retirement for years, poked his head out of his

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hermitage in a remote district of my soul and made a nasty face at my North American self. In Brazil and Uruguay and Argentina and Chile he kept putting in his oar; and my North American self again and again deferred to him politely, as if he felt that opposition in those far-distant Latin lands might impel that other self to stage a revolution and bid again for the captaincy of my soul.

As for me, I looked with amused tolerance on the armed peace into which those two selves had entered. My real self, I was firmly convinced, was neither—my real self was Tom Ybarra Number Three, the wanderer in me, the gypsy part of me.

"Long ago," I said to myself, "Tom the South American succumbed. And now, after many years in many foreign lands, this present journey through Latin America has ended the last hopes of Tom the North American to turn me permanently into a stay-at-home in the United States, deaf to the call of gypsy blood."

Everywhere I went in Latin America impressions and theories about our southern neighbors seethed and bubbled in my mind. The sight of Cordell Hull doing his own spade work for his Good Neighbor Policy in Uruguay and Argentina was good for my North American patriotism. And the sight of some North American businessmen—and some North American diplomats—committing the same old mistakes in dealing with Latin Americans drove me to exasperated profanity.

I worked out a list of *Ten Don'ts* for American businessmen and diplomats and the general run of American visitors to the Latin America of the future. As I look over this list, I find it schoolmarmish. I see myself as a stuffy pedagogue, wagging a solemn forefinger at a class of callow pupils from

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a platform of ineffable superiority. But I can't help it. How otherwise can I get my points across? Besides, it would not only be inexpedient but unpatriotic at the present time for me to sugar-coat pills of truth about our Latin American relations—I don't want to have the slightest responsibility for a sugar shortage.

Here are my *Ten Don'ts* to guide North Americans in dealing with Latin Americans:

Don't be superior. It's a mighty poor scheme in a foreign country to show a native of that country that you consider him inferior to you and then try to *sell him something* or try to get him to *sign something* that you think will be of benefit to Uncle Sam. Ten to one he won't buy—and he won't sign—and he won't even speak to you again if he can help it. Superiority complexes don't get foreign salesmen far in doing business with Latin Americans.

Don't tell a Latin American how he ought to do business. Latin Americans are often slow in their business methods; but many of them are astute businessmen, who seldom let foreigners put anything over on them. Many Americans who go to Latin America feel that Latin Americans waste a lot of time before they get down to brass tacks. Such Americans will tell you that too many Latin Americans pay too much attention to the social side of a business deal and too little attention to its strictly dollars-and-cents aspect.

They are right—from a strictly orthodox business point of view. But there is a fatal flaw in their argument: under normal peace-time conditions, other foreigners (notably Germans) *get the orders in Latin America*. And they may get them again after this war if business firms in the United States don't send the right kind of representatives to drum up trade.

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The Latin Americans have a saying: "Every man has his own way of killing fleas." Well, the Latin Americans have their own way of doing business. Too many Americans forget that. Too many Germans—and too many Japanese—remember it.

Don't be in a hurry. Most Americans, in Latin America before this war, got all hot and bothered because they couldn't spend less than a week in some Latin American city. Most Germans got all bothered and hot because they couldn't spend more than a month there.

The average American who went down in the past to Latin America on the lookout for business soon got to thinking about booking his passage home. The average German down there soon got to thinking about asking some local girl to marry him. Few Americans ever settled in Latin America. Many Germans did.

Don't be entirely ignorant of the other fellow's language. Latin Americans are delighted when a foreigner speaks to them in their native tongue. They consider it a great compliment; they feel that the foreigner in question has taken trouble to please them; and they are prone to slip orders in his direction, if they are businessmen, or listen sympathetically to what he has to say about signing a trade treaty with the United States, if he is a diplomat.

Americans hoping to win success in dealing with Spanish Americans should learn at least a little Spanish. It will pay. Or, if they intend to deal primarily with Brazil, they should learn at least a little Portuguese. But *never* should they speak to a Brazilian in Spanish—or address a letter to a Brazilian in Spanish. It is far better to speak or write English to Brazilians than to imply that their native language is Spanish. They are very touchy on the subject—very touchy indeed.

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Don't be too impatient to get paid. Latin Americans like long terms of payment. Americans, as a rule, hate to grant such terms to foreign customers. Germans, before this war, were granting liberal terms of payment right and left. And that was a great boon to the profits of German export firms.

Don't forget that Latin Americans are human beings. Too many Americans think of them first of all as economic problems. Or as political problems. They have in their minds a strange picture of a Latin American as a sort of robot. They see him as a synthetic human organism, with Good Neighborites constantly putting him under a microscope and feeling his pulse and learnedly noting his reactions to this or that Washington move, without remembering that he is a human being like ourselves, with "hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions"—and objections as ingrained as ours to being poked and prodded and stuck on pins by North American economic and political experts with no understanding whatsoever of South American realities.

Don't forget all about Latin America after this war. One thing which annoys Latin Americans most effectively in our dealings with them is the way we court and coddle them one moment, when it suits us to do so, and then drop them like red-hot bricks when we lose interest in them. Thanks to the fact that the Germans are out of the picture just now in Latin America, we are making steady gains down there. But it behooves us to *maintain* those gains. And we cannot maintain them unless we work out, with care and wisdom, a *continuing Latin American policy* and apply it, in a spirit of mutual co-operation, to our future dealings with the Latin Americans.

Don't think too much of making profits and too little of making friends. What we need most in the Latin America of

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the future is friends; if we get them, profits will take care of themselves. A plant has to be watered and tended and watched before it grows into robust good health. Our Good Neighbor Policy is a struggling plant. If we don't water it and tend it and watch it, the Germans, or some other aggressive nation, will pull it up by the roots. And they will put one of their own in its place and water the substitute and tend it and watch it.

Don't think that Latin Americans look for culture to the United States. They don't. To them, the Continent of Culture is Europe. To them, the Capital of Culture is Paris. They are waiting impatiently for the Nazi blight to be lifted from Paris in order to flock there with the directness and alacrity of homing pigeons.

The United States, to them, is the Land of Materialism. New York, to them, is the Capital of Machinery. "Always Europe for the things of the spirit—never North America." That's a South American slogan. The South Americans mean no offense by thinking about us that way—they just *do*, that's all.

Don't think of Latin America as a lot of democratic nations. It isn't. Though the twenty Latin American countries are classed in the list of the world's nations as republics, most of them don't deserve that classification.

There is little real democracy in Latin America. Down there it is not something essential like the air we breathe, as it is with us. In most of Latin America democracy is artificial. Investigation will usually show that a Latin American "republic" is under some form of dictatorship—in fact, with regard to a number of those countries, no investigation at all is needed to establish that fact.

Some day democracy may be in the saddle all the way from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. Today it most emphatically is

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not. Any American who expects at the present time to find in Latin America much genuine democracy as we understand the term is heading for devastating disappointment.

Never have I been able to look upon Latin America with detachment. You can't be detached about it if you are the son of a South American father as I am; if you have lived for years, as I have, in the midst of South American sights and sounds and scenes—and uncles and aunts and cousins and friends.

When a detached North American acquaintance talks to me about the economic implications of the sugar situation in some South American land, I don't see economics at all. I see the great sugar plantations in the beautiful valley of Caracas, where my father was born. I smell again the delicious odor of boiling cane sap; and I hear again the friendly greetings of the plantation workers, as they go out, with sharp machetes under their arms, to cut down the cane ripening all around them.

And it's the same way with coffee.

A solemn North American friend buttonholes me. Solemnly he says: “Tom, what do you think the effect of the rise in the price of Brazilian coffee will be on the activities of the Nazi fifth column in the state of Rio Grande do Sul—especially in its repercussions on the fall in the price of Colombian coffee on the activities of the Communist fifth column in the department of Antioquia?”

With equal solemnity I reply:

“The effect will be very serious indeed—that is, unless it is not serious at all.”

“Extremely well put,” says my solemn American friend. “Tom, I thank you. You have clarified my ideas.”

But already I am not listening to him any more. I am back in

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happy days of childhood, back on the coffee plantation of my uncle in the valley of Caracas. I am helping my uncle's majordomo keep tally on the coffee picked that day by dozens of swarthy plantation hands. They empty out at my feet, from big, square wooden boxes, thousands and thousands of coffee berries, while I sit, with a grubby little pencil in my hand, all through the drowsy afternoon, chanting: "*Uno-dos-tres. Uno-dos-tres-cuatro. Uno-dos-tres-cuatro-cinco. . .*"

Or, I am listening again to the *joropo*, the national dance of Venezuela—strummed by guitarists who, that morning, were coffee pickers—danced by men and women who, at dawn, were out in the cool woodlands of my uncle's plantation, picking and picking and picking, while the sun rose and fell, and beautiful birds with bright feathers were singing in the branches overhead. *That* is what the economic implications of the coffee situation mean to me. And I think it's a good way to look at the matter. Economics can do with a little humanity—and I don't care how many austere, unsmiling economists disagree with me.

Or take my attitude toward South American politics. All through my life I have listened to the regular run of North American stories about South American revolutions—stories which turn those revolutions into absurd comic operas. But that is *not* what South American revolutions mean to me. They mean fighting—street fighting—just outside my window. They mean a man lying dead right across my threshold—looking like a hideous caricature of a living person. They mean bullets whining overhead—bullets which at any moment may kill the friends around me—or kill me, for that matter.

South American politics mean happy days of childhood when my father was Military Governor of Caracas, or Minis-

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ter of War of Venezuela—when I strutted by his side in a little imitation military uniform—when I counted among my most intimate friends dozens of officers of the regular Venezuelan army, and walked in and out of the barracks of the garrison of Caracas with all the casual air of a grizzled veteran—though I was only ten years old. South American revolutions mean the sudden ending for me of all this pomp and circumstance—with my father and myself sprinting for the nearest seaport just ahead of the revolutionists and scrambling aboard an American steamer, anchored close to an American warship, to avail ourselves of the very welcome protection of the stars and stripes, the flag of my mother's country.

That is what South American revolutions mean to me. Now that they are far back in my past, I can laugh at them; but never can I laugh so heartily as my North American friends can. Those revolutions were altogether too close for comfort or laughter.

Now, I realize perfectly well that Americans cannot look upon Latin America as I do. But there is a middle ground. That middle ground lies somewhere between my position—on the inside looking out—and the position of those who insist upon considering Latin America either an economic-political abstraction or a ridiculous comic opera. The more Americans can get themselves onto this middle ground—the middle ground of the *human approach*—the better it will be for our extremely important relations with the Latin America of the future.

That trip to Latin America for Collier's—and another equally long one for the New York Times which I took afterward—and the Latin American half of me, often scotched but never killed—set me to thinking hard. It behooves our govern-

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ment, I realized, to prevent any nation from wielding influence stronger than ours down there—in trade or diplomacy.

Again and again I asked myself: "What, exactly, should be our future Latin American policy?" And, little by little—after visiting and revisiting, studying and restudying most of the Latin American countries—I arrived at this conclusion:

What the United States ought to do in its relations with Latin America is to use *first* the velvet glove—and then *again* the velvet glove—and then *still again* the velvet glove. Then—*if we must*—we ought to strip that glove from our outstretched hand and show the *clenched fist*.

I don't mean that in any imperialistic sense. Far from it. I am dead against North American imperialism in any form. When I was a boy, I saw it in action from the vantage point of a Latin American city—Caracas, Venezuela—where I was living. I did not like it. It left a rank taste in my mouth. I hope never to know that taste again. But that does not mean that I consider politeness by North Americans toward South Americans—though it most assuredly should be a leading ingredient of any future Latin American policy of ours—the whole story in relations between Uncle Sam and Latin America. *Politeness should go hand in hand with firmness*. I cannot see why being polite to our southern neighbors should be allowed to reach such proportions as to give the green light to foreign rivals on other continents as they push and jostle to get ahead of the United States, as traders and diplomats, in Latin America.

I am dead against the wanton and arbitrary assertion by this country of our paramount importance on this continent. I am dead against any policy of ours that would impair the sovereignty of any one of the twenty republics to the south of us. But

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I am also dead against the assertion by any other nation of importance greater than ours on this side of the Atlantic and the Pacific. And, if the only way to prevent some other nation on some other continent from arrogating to itself paramount importance on this continent is to assert such importance ourselves, then I believe absolutely that the United States should assert it.

I sincerely hope that every one of the twenty-one American republics—and Canada as well and the dependencies of European nations on this hemisphere—will always get along with each other in peace and harmony, without the slightest shadow of looming hegemony to darken the light of equality. But—*if any nation must be paramount on this continent, let it be the United States.* To say that is not to advocate the Big Stick or Dollar Diplomacy or Manifest Destiny. I hate those doctrines. I hate them with profound and abiding hatred. I know well what they have done in the past to poison the relationship between North Americans and South Americans. Never again must they be permitted to raise among us their ugly heads and snarling voices. But, in saying that, I do not imply for a moment that any other nation should be allowed to introduce on this continent any European or Asiatic substitute for Big Stick or Dollar Diplomacy or Manifest Destiny. If the interests of the whole American continent and the requirements of self-protection and the law of self-preservation demand that some one nation assume protective leadership over all the nations of the Americas, that nation must be the United States—and only the United States.

Our Good Neighbor Policy has done much to make Latin Americans forget the rough stuff which we have dished out to

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them in the past when we felt big and ruthless and imperialistic. It has done more than most Americans think to knit together the twenty-one American republics.

In Latin America, President Roosevelt is respected and liked. In Latin America Secretary of State Hull is liked and respected. The way they have stuck to their Good Neighbor promises—promises whose blood-brothers have been all too often forgotten in earlier periods of rapprochement with Latin America—has aroused satisfaction and admiration among the Latin Americans.

Our Secretary of State has a brand of genuine courtesy to which individuals of Latin blood respond instinctively. I met Mr. Hull in Montevideo when the Pan-American Conference was being held there a few years ago. Two things in connection with him struck me most forcibly.

The first was his method (he told me about it, with many chuckles) of going around informally, at informal hours, to pay unannounced calls on formal-minded South American statesmen. "Why, I called on one of them when he was in his bath!" chuckled Mr. Hull. "At first," he added, "they didn't like it—but afterward they got to like it very much."

The other thing was this: One day President Terra of Uruguay came around to the Hotel del Parque in Montevideo, where the American delegation to the conference had its headquarters, to pay a call upon Secretary Hull. After it was over, Mr. Hull escorted President Terra across the front veranda of the hotel and down the front steps to the presidential automobile. He did it with such simplicity, with such instinctive and unadorned courtesy, that I said to myself:

"There are two polite men. One is a Latin, sprung from Spanish ancestors, to whom deep obeisance and flowery com-

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pliments were second nature. The other is a mountaineer from Tennessee, without frills or circumlocutions—descended from gaunt and homespun folk. But, believe me, when it comes to politeness—honest-to-God basic politeness—that Latin has nothing on that Tennessean."

Franklin Roosevelt and Cordell Hull have put politeness into our Good Neighbor Policy. It behooves their successors to keep it there unimpaired. *But they must add firmness to it.*

Our Good Neighbor Policy, before this war, did much to prove to Latin Americans that we wished to treat them with good will. Therefore, when other continents went up in flames of hate and death, half our battle was already won in Latin America.

Latin Americans who know how to think are well aware what nations are today the breeding-grounds of aggression. They know perfectly well that the hot breath of conquest does *not* come from Washington. They let their eyes rove uneasily over Berlin and Tokio and what they see there makes them gaze, with a friendliness rare in earlier years, at the United States. It makes them look with satisfaction at the American navy, which exists for protection not aggression; at our expanding industrial power, which means armor for weak Latin American nations against strong nations across the oceans; at the promises already magnificently kept again and again by the men who are shaping our new policy of friendship and solidarity with Latin America.

Those promises must be kept by the successors of those men in the teeth of every temptation to revert to Big Stick and Dollar Diplomacy and Manifest Destiny. We must be the protectors of our southern neighbors, with no thought of exploitation or conquest. But—if necessary—we must be pre-

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pared to take first place, as equals not superiors, among the nations of the American hemisphere.

On the homeward lap of our trip, Penny and I were leaning against the rail of the Grace Liner *Santa Maria*. Only a few hours more lay between us and New York harbor. On that journey we had discussed impressions of Latin America while they were still fresh; and I had served her my Latin American theories while they were still hot off the griddle.

Behind us now was my quest for Latin American traits and facts. Behind us was Penny's exciting bargaining for Chilean rugs just before the *Santa Maria* pulled away from the wharf at Valparaiso. (She eventually got one with the grotesque figure of a moustached man woven into it, which, since it bears a marked resemblance to Adolf Hitler, makes stepping on that rug a treat.) Behind us now was Penny's triumphant appearance in our cabin at Manta, Ecuador, minus a ten-dollar bill, which she had demanded of me a few minutes before, but plus three genuine Panama hats (for Peggy, herself, and me) which, a vendor had assured her solemnly only an hour before, could not possibly be bought for less than twenty-five dollars.

All this was now behind us—with the rush and din of Buenos Aires, the white volcanoes and blue lakes of Chile, the languorous beauty of Rio.

At the thought of Rio a picture arose in my mind of the surf and sand and stars at Copacabana—and I asked Penny, as she looked dreamily at the sea:

"Thinking of that beautiful Brazilian beach you liked so much?"

"Yes, Copacapablanca."

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“What’s that?”

“I mean Copacovadonga.”

“Don’t you mean Copacabana?”

“Oh, blah, blah, blah!”

Epilogue

"When at Anchor We Ride . . ."

"WHERE are you going?" asked Penny.

"To take the dog out," I answered.

"Well, be sure to be back for dinner at seven-thirty exactly. There will be a soufflé that you particularly like."

I went out with Pooh Bah, our dog—a Scotty who, with the uncanny ability of dogs, has become an integral part of the household. I went out of the front door of the building which contained our apartment, on East Fifty-First Street, Manhattan, close to the point where that thoroughfare is brought to an abrupt end by the East River.

When I lived there, I liked to look at the East River. It reminded me that I was Tom the Traveler, Tom the Little-Friend-of-all-the-World's-Trains-and-Boats, Old Pa Rolling Stock.

From my window I could see the steamships of the Fall River Line steaming toward New England. That seemed appropriate. The Fall River Line, in the early years of my boyhood, when I was being initiated into the Brotherhood-of-Those-Whose-Favorite-Town-Is-The-Next-Town, had always given me a thrill. How many times had I been routed out of Boston and placed on a train of the Old Colony Railroad and put on board the *Pilgrim* or *Puritan* in Fall River and extracted therefrom next morning by one or both of my parents and hustled to the pier of a bigger steamship scheduled to take us to South America

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or Europe! How many times had I journeyed in the opposite direction on the *Puritan* or *Pilgrim*, after a sojourn across the Caribbean or the Atlantic!

Down in Venezuela I used to describe to little Venezuelans of my vintage the vast size and incredible luxury of those Fall River boats.

“On the corridor outside the dining hall of one of them,” I used to tell my young cousin Ana Teresa, “there is a marble floor!”

“*De veras?*” Ana Teresa’s eyes opened wide in amazement. I nodded my head with convincing vigor.

The Fall River Line meant to me the free life of the man who refuses to be a stick-in-the-mud, whose heels are untrammelled, whose soul thrills in superior fashion when stay-at-homes obey the call of “Visitors Ashore!” and leaps with joy at the cry of “All Aboard!” Yes, I liked to look out of the window of my apartment on East Fifty-First Street and watch the successors of the *Pilgrim* and *Puritan* steam past, headed for Hell Gate and Point Judith.

As I walked, in the leisurely fashion imposed on leash-holders by dogs on a leash, along East Fifty-First Street toward its dead end on the bank of the East River, I thought deeply about my agitated career as journalist and traveler. I smiled as I looked back on the decisive victory won years ago by my North American self over my South American self. I chuckled at the thought that my North American self also had gone down in defeat before that Self Number Three of mine, the strongest of all—Tom Ybarra the Wanderer.

That self, I reflected with much satisfaction, was beyond the reach of defeat. Always he would keep unfurled over the citadel of my innermost soul the proud banner of Nomad’s

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Land—always he would keep me immune from domesticity-carried-too-far—always he would make it impossible for me to hear those words most dreaded by the Amalgamated-Devotees-of-Going-Places: “Do you mean to tell me you haven’t heard about Tristram the Traveler? Why, he has *settled down!*”

Yes, Tom the Latin had failed in his crusade to tether me to the shores of Venezuela. Tom the North American had been beaten in his endeavors to rope me, in humdrum domestic stodginess, to the territory of the United States. But Tom the Gypsy would never be beaten! Never would he acknowledge the jurisdiction of stabilizing influences of any sort! Never! That Tom, said I to myself with profound conviction, is indeed the master of my fate and the captain of my soul.

Pooh Bah tugged at his leash. His eyes were riveted on a near-by lamp post. I humored him.

An old friend of mine, whom I hadn’t seen for several years, rounded the corner of East Fifty-First Street and Beekman Place. At sight of me and Pooh Bah and the lamp post, he leaned against some iron railings and shook with laughter.

“What’s the matter?” I asked frigidly.

He laughed and laughed and laughed.

“Tom the Wanderer!” he squeaked. “Tom the Traveler! Oh, my God!” Leaning heavily against those iron railings, he whipped out his handkerchief and wiped away tears of amusement welling from his eyes.

“I am that same Tom!” I informed him, ice in my voice.

Pooh Bah tugged at his leash. I humored him.

My friend had by this time dried his eyes. He trusted himself to stand erect without the aid of those iron railings.

“Tom the Nomad!” he said.

“I’m still that!” I told him angrily. “Why, what I like best

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about living here is that I can see the Fall River Line boats. They mean to me adventure and movement and excitement. . . .”

“Don’t you know that the Fall River Line is about to go out of business?”

“Well, what of it? Does that necessarily mean that I am anchored, settled down? I know where there are much bigger boats ready to take me on a lot of much longer trips than the trip to Fall River.”

“Yeah?”

“Certainly. Why, you poor . . .”

Pooh Bah tugged at his leash. I humored him. My friend again whipped out his handkerchief. Recovering, he asked:

“Where do you live?”

“In the house right in front of you.”

“On which floor?”

“The ninth.”

“What’s her name?”

“Penelope.”

My friend raised his eyes until they were on a level with the windows of the ninth-floor apartment of the building in front of him. Then, sweeping off his hat, he bowed deeply and respectfully.

“Penelope, I salute you!” he said solemnly. “*Penelope Victrix!*”

“Say, what in hell . . . ?” I began wrathfully.

Pooh Bah tugged at his leash. I humored him. My friend held out his hand.

“Farewell, Tom the Wanderer!” he said. “Goodby, Tom the Nomad!”

“Listen, you. . . .”

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My friend walked away. Almost until he had reached the corner of First Avenue, I could hear his peals of laughter.

"The damned fool!" I ejaculated. "Why, what the devil does he mean by . . . ?"

I looked at my watch. I gave Pooh Bah's leash a violent yank.

"Five minutes late!" I gasped. Ignoring Pooh Bah's budding interest in still another lamp post, I hauled him homeward.

Penny met me at the door. In her eyes was just the slightest hint of reproof.

"Late!" she chided.

"Only a few minutes."

"Well, it doesn't matter. That soufflé you like so much is all ready for you. Let's eat."

We sat down. I looked at Penny.

"What are you grinning at?" she inquired.

"Oh, nothing! I was just remembering a couple of words out of classical antiquity."

"What words?"

"Penelope Victrix."

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